

MESSIANISM AND EPIPHANY:
AN ESSAY ON THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

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Philosophical Currents

Vol. 9

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Messianism and Epiphany: An Essay on the Origins of Christianity

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Library of Congress Catalog

Card Number 73-88495

ISBN 90 6032 023 9

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Printed in Hungary

The acceptance of the Christian faith by Constantine I and then the forceful conversion to it of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire are perhaps one of the most momentous events of ancient history. It is also baffling since it is incomprehensible why the highly civilized Hellenistic-Roman world took over the foundations of its faith from a relatively small people, the Judaeans, who were not very well liked, but rather an object of general hate and scorn. Their customs provoked the historian Tacitus to call “*mos Iudaeorum sordidus atque absurdus*”; a Roman satirical poet said scornfully, “*Credat Iudaeus Apella*.” (This may the Jew Apella believe.) Thus they were decried in Rome as superstitious, and St. Luke uttered a similar opinion, when he said, in the *Acts of the Apostles* that, while the Greeks ask for reasons, the Judaeans ask for miracles (signs of the deity). The Romans were quite receptive to foreign beliefs, yet Tacitus spoke of Christian beliefs as an evil, and stated that the origin of this evil (*origo huius mali*) was Judea, and it came to Rome where all the dregs of the commonwealth (*sentina rei publicae*) are in confluence.

But the reception of Christianity was a long process which took ten generations, and when this was accomplished Tacitus was no longer alive; the culture of the Hellenistic world declined sharply and the fortunes of Christianity rose. But it was always a creed of the lower classes, not of the intellectual élite, which always opposed it. When St. Paul allegedly wrote his masterwork, the *Letter to the Romans*, he did address himself only to the Greek speaking people of Rome, which had more than half a million slaves in its walls, rather more than half of its inhabitants. It is to these lowly people that the Christians spoke, and what they were presented with was a sort of anthropomorphized, vulgarized Platonism. The difficulty of disentangling the origins of Christianity is due to its connection with theological doctrines and powerful institutions, furthermore to literary documents whose authors are mostly unknown, and which came to us in an altered shape. They were compiled, rewritten, interpolated, etc., many times.

Christianity had no single founder, but was a collective enterprise of the working lower middle classes. Christ, its *heros eponymos*, died allegedly the lowly death of a slave. This has certainly symbolic meaning, it means that God assumed in his “son” the form of a slave, at least in his death; in life he was allegedly a carpenter, a craftsman, as were many Judaeans teachers of the Torah. But he was not a Judean, rather a Galilean,

and so were all his pupils, with the exception of Juda who was a traitor to him.

The fact, that St. Paul played a prominent role in the doctrinal formation of Christian beliefs, shows that the Judaeans, in an ethnical sense, had an important part in it, but since the *soil of Palestine* yielded thus far no testimony to the origins of Christianity, the main problem, in an historical sense, remains the locality of its origin. St. Paul himself was not a Palestinian but a Diaspora Jew allegedly from Tarsus, Cilicia, although he affirms his Judaic origins with great energy. But he is the only "saint" (Christian) to do so. If the letter *Pros Galatas* is authentic, it could be said even that he was an indirect witness of the life of Christ, since he states there that he was in Jerusalem and that he met there Kephass (Petrus) and Iakobos (James), the Lord's brother. But he asks here not a word about the Lord, the latter's brother, or Kephass. The same surprising fact is in the *Acts of the Apostles*. He wants merely to prove the authenticity of his apostolic mission, and afterwards quarrels with Kephass about the validity of the Jewish dietary laws, accusing him of insincerity, and discusses circumcision. These questions concern, in the first place, the pagan converts to Christianity, but have no connection with the life of the Lord. Is it conceivable that Paul, speaking to the persons closest to the Lord, according to the New Testament literature, does not have to report a single fact about him after having spoken to them? After all, he saw him only in a vision. This makes the authenticity of the *Letter to the Galatians* and the *Acts*, which repeat the story of these meetings, suspect. And if this testimony to the life of Christ may be disregarded, there is no eyewitness account of the life of Christ left, since the Gospels were not written by such witnesses. The question remains, therefore, unsolved about the locality that was the origin of the Christian faith.

Since most relics of the early Christian era are extant in Rome, it would be logical to suppose that Rome, or any other important Hellenistic city, for instance Alexandria in Egypt, or Antioch in Syria, were linked directly with its origins; this was not a community of eremites as that of Qumran but rather of big city dwellers seeking the comforts of religious life in special communities of people living there. It is from Rome that the earliest mention of Christians comes, namely the statement of Suetonius, that the emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome in 49 A.D., because they made riots about the person of Chrestus. This can only refer to Christ, but Suetonius used the name Chrestus because this was more familiar to him than Xristos, which means the anointed one. Here two facts emerge: (1) that Claudius did not distinguish between Jews and Christians, but considered these factions as Jewish; (2) that in 49 A.D. there was in Rome a considerable Christian community, although this was scarcely more than 15 years after the assumed death of Christ. If we assume that he died in Jerusalem, we would have to assume that in the course of those 15 years a largely unknown preacher from

Galilee killed in Jerusalem has become known in far away Rome and that a community of believers was founded there so strong that, when riots occurred on this account, emperor Claudius had to proceed to expulsion of all Jews in Rome.

It is obvious that messianic hopes existed within the Jewish community, perhaps more so in the Diaspora than in Judea itself. The Jews lived in Judea in oppression, because of the greed of the Roman administration and the actions of the Roman governors and armies, which collided with Jewish religious ideas, so that the Jews thought that an end of the world and a salvation were badly needed. On the other hand, such a concentration of world power in one city, Rome, and in the hands of one man, the Emperor, were never seen before; it may all have looked like a special epoch ripe for a great upheaval, the end of the world, the coming of the Messiah.

Messianism was originally the belief that at the end of Time or History God will send a man with charismatic qualities—the anointed one (the Messiah), a divine ruler and king who will initiate a state of righteousness and of bliss that will follow the present state of misery. This belief was religious. Already in *Deuteronomy* 18,15–18, in the farewell address of Moses, there is the promise: “The Lord Thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet. . .” This belief was elaborated in a more extensive way by the prophet Jesaiah who lived around 735 B.C., some two generations before the Greek poet Hesiod. This shows the different directions the cultures of the Greeks and Hebrews took. The Greeks also had a concept of a happy state, but they placed it in the past as the golden age.

Aurea prima sata est aetas quae vindice nullo sponte sua sine lege fidem rectumque colebat. This is what P. Ovidius Naso, a contemporary of Caesar Octavianus Augustus, tells us. The Jews, however, saw the Messianic age in the future as the ultimate hope of mankind. This belief also had political connotations. The Jewish prophets preached to the kings and grandees more than to the people. They were public orators like Demosthenes in Athens or Cicero in Rome. The greatest Messianists were Jesaiah and Deutero-Isaiah. The preachings of Jesaiah fell into the most critical period of the Kingdom of Juda, preceding the destruction of the state and the dispersal of the people. The prophet, as well as other prophets, explained the present plight as a punishment for the sins of the people, the injustices in the state, haughtiness of the mighty, luxuriousness of the women, the lack of piety, the disobedience to the law of God. But the prophets presented a hope. God would not abandon his own people but renew his covenant with them and save at least a remnant. These will be the last events initiated by the Messiah. Here salvation is a collective one, and the theory itself assumes a direct intervention of God into human affairs. It is interesting to note that such an order of events occurred, indeed, repeatedly during Jewish history—but without the benefit of a Messiah. Messianic salvation is termed “help”

(*yeshua*) in Hebrew, as Is. 9,5(6) shows. He is to be a man praised for his charismatic qualities: ("For unto us a child is born..."). He is called "heroic god" (*el gibor*), "eternal father" (*abi ad*), "prince of peace" (*sar shalom*). Eternal peace is the main concern of the messianic prophecy, and it was indispensable for a small weak people. There shall be no end to peace on the throne of David, the prophet holds, under the government of the elect. He will be a descendant of David. "There will be an issue from the stem of Jesse" (Is. 11). His will be a spirit of wisdom, understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of fear of God. It is not clear whether the man thus described in chapter 11 is identical with the one mentioned in chapter 9 (see above). The realm of peace is delineated in Is. 11,6: "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb..." This state of final bliss is obviously miraculous and not of this world. The peace will spread from mankind to the animals. It is an extension of a state of peace into absolute general validity. This state presupposes a state of world righteousness, and in it, according to Isaiah 26, 8, God "will take away death forever." The state of eternal peace will also be a state of immortality.

Is. 53 has another version of the messianic savior, namely one that would suffer to atone for the transgressions of Israel, which he will take upon himself. He will be put into prison. "He is despised and rejected of men" (Is. 53,3), "a man of sorrows" (53,5: "wounded for our transgressions", "bruised for our iniquities" (53,8), "...taken from prison... who shall know his origin? (53,9): he made his grave with the wicked and the rich in his death, because he has done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth". This portrait of the fate of the just is remarkable. The eschatological aspect is stressed in Isaiah 65,17: "I create a new heaven and a new earth and the former shall not be remembered..." There are great differences in these two descriptions of the Redeemer, and while the Gospels use rather the second model, they combine with it some elements of the first, for instance, in attributing to the Messiah a Davidic origin, but this genealogy may be a later addition when the Jews no longer formed an important component of the new community; because it is not probable that they would accept the theory of the Davidic origin of the present Messiah Jesus. This origin may have merely accentuated the kingly status of the Messiah and be understood "symbolically," just as the text of the Old Testament was interpreted symbolically, as originally the works of Homer were interpreted by the grammarians of Alexandria. Thus the philosopher Philo of Alexandria interpreted the Old Testament. The Old Testament works became thereby a sort of Sibylline books for the adepts of the Messianic (Christian) religion.

The estate of the Messiah, according to Deutero-Isaiah, is not kingly but lowly; yet here in the Christian tradition this lowliness is mitigated by his genealogy. Furthermore, according to Jewish concepts, the Messiah is supposed to be the anointed king of Israel, and his coming is supposed to be

preceded by the appearance of the prophet Elijah. Therefore, at the end of the Seder (the Easter supper), they open the doors of the apartment to “let in” the invisible Elijah thus the Easter supper becomes the initiation of the coming of the Messiah, since the Easter month, Nissan, is the first month in the year (although the New Year’s festivity is celebrated rather at the beginning of Fall). This Elijah angle adumbrates at least the idea that Easter (Passah) is not only celebrated as the remembrance of liberation from the Egyptian servitude but as the beginning of the era of the future Messianic liberation, and this is its main role in the Messianic religion of “the saints” (the Christian community of the saints), therefore Christ dies at Easter. In the two versions of redemption in Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah—which, however, the Jews considered as one prophet—there is the version of the creation of a new sky and a new earth which once more had to be conceived “symbolically”, since no outward change of this kind was observable during the reign of Tiberius, while the predicted abolishment of death was replaced by the asserted resurrection of the Messiah. The description of the resurrection is rather indirect, stating that the body of Jesus was not to be found in his sepulcher, when it was sought, but he appears then as a resurrected being to his disciples. These appearances seem to be a later addition, because the gospel after St. Mark seems to have been terminated at chapter 16,8, namely at the words “ephobounto gar” (because they were afraid).

Reverting to the original basic text of Jesaiah, it is not conclusively detectable whether the boy called “Immanuel” (Is. 7,14) is also a Messiah. He is born to an “almah” which the Seventy translated into the Greek “parthenos”, and it is in this form that it passed into the gospel after Matthew* (1,18–21); this was, in other words, the prediction of the virgin birth of the savior. If the word “almah” does not mean virgin, Matthew’s interpretation is based on an error of the Greek translation, and it is to be assumed that this Septuagint was used by the authors of the Gospels, not the Hebrew original. Whatever the real meaning of the word “almah” originally was, it is obvious that the translating scholars (LXX) believed that this word meant “virgin”. It was said to the King Ahaz that the birth of this “Immanuel” will have a tremendous importance and be a “sign”. If, however, “almah” did not mean virgin, what miracle would the birth of Immanuel consist in? The virginity is the miracle. Immanuel was *no Davidide* but King Ahaz was.

The book of Jeremiah (23,5–6) also contains a prophecy about a successor of David whose name is “God-our righteousness” (JHVH-zidkenu); similar designations reappear in the Dead Sea scrolls. He will be a Davidide and rule Israel and Judah. According to Jer. 31 (31, 33, 34), in those days God

* Matthew, Gospel of a Saint, is compiled from two main sources, Mark and the Logia, with additional matter, especially the beginning and end. It was written for Jewish readers. Its earliest date is A.D. 60–70, some place it 10 years later (cf. *Concise Dictionary of Ancient History*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1955, p. 239).

shall make "a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah." This idea of a "new covenant" becomes a main feature of the Messianic (Christian) belief. The words may be the same, but the connotations are very different. These prophecies are mainly politico-religious. In Jesaiah they are strongly eschatological, envisioning an epoch when God shall take away death, create a different sky, a different earth, and people it with pacific, righteous beings.

The suffering Messiah of Deutero-Isaiah who became the main model of the Christian Messiah atones, however, for the sins of the people of Israel, not for the original sin of Adam. This philosophical connection recalls strongly Hellenistic Alexandrian philosophy as practiced by Philo Judaeus, whose nephew, Tiberius Alexander (one time governor of Judea, then of Alexandria, a friend of Vespasianus), was a commander of part of the Roman army of Titus that destroyed Jerusalem and killed its inhabitants. The suffering Messiah of Deutero-Jesaiah dies between the wicked and the rich. This is reproduced and accentuated when Christ is said to hang between two criminals. But this may mean also something else and is not necessarily the meaning of the death between "the wicked and the rich", since they are not necessarily transgressors of human laws. It should be stressed that the ancient prophetic writings do not distinguish between metaphysical, ethical, and social reasons; what they condemn is simply "injustice"; but the Xristos of the New Testament dies the death of a Roman slave. Here class consciousness emerges.

The gospels after Mark and John carry no Davidic genealogy of the Messiah, but start significantly with the story of John the Baptist, who as a precursor of the Messiah seems to play a similar role as Elijah in Jewish lore, but he is an historical personality and is a good example of the mixture of the historical with the mythical, or rather fictional, so that the historical becomes a sort of authentication of the fictional. There is a clear contradiction between the asserted Davidic origin of the Messiah in Matthew and Luke and his divine origin as engendered by the Holy Ghost, since his mother Mary is not a Davidide. In the genealogy of Jesus, Mark goes back to Abraham, but Luke who has the most fertile imagination ascends to Adam and to God himself, saying "Adam tou theou". It is remarkable that only Christ and John the Baptist are dignified by a genealogy in the gospels—nobody else—and that there is a certain parallelism between the two, which may suggest an original unity of the two. The ascension to Adam by St. Luke reflects the knowledge of the theory of original sin formed by St. Paul, who as the so-called apostle of the Gentiles was especially honored by St. Luke by a life story of his own in the *Praxeis Apostolon*. In the Matthew gospel (1,16) it is said "Jesus who is called (*legomenos*) Christ". The gospel of St. John really starts with the story of John the Baptist (John 1,19), since the preceding philosophical discussion about the Logos and the identification

of the Logos and Christ (and the latter's *eternity*) is an obvious addition which does not belong to the following biographical description. It is merely an attempt to reconcile the story of the Messiah with the Alexandrian theory of the Logos, and to anthropomorphize it. Luke also totemizes the holy ghost (*pneuma hagion*) in saying (Luke 3,22), "it descended in bodily shape as a dove"—thus recalling Greek mythology, where gods assume the shape of animals. It is, however, derived from the two pigeons (Luke 2, 23, 24) sacrificed to the Lord at the birth of the first-born son and suggests also that Christ is the first-born son of God, as he was of Mary.

By the descent from David, the Messiah is the anointed king of Israel, and, by the descent from the *Pneuma hagion*, he becomes at the same time a son of God, the latter being clearly a Hellenistic concept. The descent is couched in contradictory terms which are reconciled by Hellenistic ideas. There was no clear division between god and men according to these ideas; divinity could be conferred on rulers by the Roman Senate, as it was on Augustus (*consecratio*). Seleucid kings were called "theos" (god) or "soter" (savior). There is a difference between the concept of a "soter" and an anointed one (Messiah). The Christian concept of salvation combined two different elements: the Jewish concept of the anointed king in eschatological conditions and the idea of a god incarnate in a man, i.e. in an Epiphanes. Seleucid kings were called "Epiphanes", i.e. gods appearing in men. These were selected individuals, kings, not ordinary men. Gods appeared only in royal families; they could appear in Christ as a descendant of David, but this is complicated with the question of the virgin birth, as suggested by the "parthenos" of the Septuagint. If all these traits were attributed to the Messiah as "predicted", i.e. as fulfillment of a prophetic prediction of the Old Testament, one thing cannot be explained in this way, namely the asserted form of the death of the Messiah, because this became a partly naturalistic description of the most cruel kind of execution evolved by the Romans and unknown to the ancient prophets. That the son of God had to die the death of a slave is a highly symbolic event and appealing to the main subjects of the Christian propaganda of conversion, the ancient slaves, the indispensable subjects of the economic life of Rome. The death on the cross is a slow death, imagined by sadists. But this sort of killing was repugnant to Jewry as, e.g., the story of the killing on the cross of 800 Jewish men by their king Alexander Jannaeus, in which he was apparently reproached by the Dead Sea scrolls community, because "such things were not done in Israel". Stoning, not crucifying, was the Jewish punishment of blasphemy. But was this a capital crime to a Roman procurator?

There was certainly in the Jewish communities of the Dispersion a strong Messianic movement, but this movement was influenced by the Hellenistic mentality of the environment, and had to assume a different direction from that in the homeland if there was one there also. The Messiah-King of the

Gospels, the suffering Messiah who died the death of a slave, is the ideal of humanity, the counterpart of the Roman Caesar, manifested in Tiberius and Caligula; and as a manifestation of love and justice he was killed (crucified) by Caesar's henchmen. The Caesar is in original Christianity the manifestation (epiphany) of Satan while the Xristos is the epiphany of God. This original contrast is not mentioned in the gospels but is still evident in Paul's *Letter to the Romaeans* and also in the *Apocaleipsis Ioannou*. The gospels admonish rather to give Caesar what is Caesar's, but this prudential advice shows the original opposition to Caesar. The Xristos cannot be understood as the opponent of the Jewish authorities, the Pharisees, the archpriest, the synhedrium but of paganism. This stand was changed in the gospels after the destruction of Jerusalem. Not Caesar but the Jewish authorities were mainly attacked, and the Pharisees—the traditionalists of Judaism—were condemned as insincere, etc., while the Samaritans, who were hated by the Judeans as insincere and hostile, became the main dispensers of charity. But this is a purely literary contrast and a literary denunciation. The Pharisees, i.e. the traditional Jews, may have been the main opponent to the Christian sect or the main competitors in the conversion of the Gentiles. But this was a later development, not the original mentality of the "saints", the supporters of Messianism in the Diaspora of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch or in Asia Minor like Ephesus or Tarsus. The reproaches made to the Pharisees are in general those made to any establishment, sanctimoniousness, insincerity, fraud, love of honors, etc. But it should be stressed that those properties could never prompt the great Messianic movement in Rome or Alexandria. It is the situation in Rome that had such power and influence. The Messianic movement can only be understood as opposition to Paganism and the Roman order, not to Judean authorities whom most of the Christian converts scarcely knew in the big metropolitan centers of the Roman Empire.

The concept of "Pharisees" is very hazy in the New Testament, it is used by people unfamiliar with the concept. St. Luke conjoins (Luke 7,30) "the Pharisees and the nomikoi" ("the teachers of the law") which resembles, the "Jehovah witnesses" and the "cyclists", as the "nomikoi" were themselves mostly Pharisees. But all these distinctions lost their proper meaning after the destruction of Jerusalem, and then you could say about the "Pharisees" whatever you wanted.

The opposition of the Roman world and the "saints" of Rome (the "Christians") was obvious and both the splendor and the miseries of the Julian empire were a contradiction to everything the saints believed in. The Roman senate conferred the divinity on the ruler; this was an honor accorded by men to men by a parliamentary vote. To the "saints" this was a blasphemy. The Messiah was the exact opposite to Caesar, his divinity was God-given. He was conceived by the *pneuma hagion* (the divine spirit or ra-

ther breath). His coming might have been suggested by the conditions of the Tiberian times. The writers of the N.T. were the contemporaries of the Roman Latin writers and their just opposite in an ideological sense. The Gospels described the story of the Messiah, the *Theos Epiphanes*, the manifested God, like the Aeneis glorified the “gens Iulia”. But the sublimity of the sacrifice of the Xristos, of his death, and his resurrection showed another kind of “consecratio” than that of the Roman Senate, and nowhere does the difference of the pagan and Judeo-Christian concepts appear clearer than in this act. Augustus became a god descended on earth by Act of Congress, and the Xristos was an Epiphanes by the “pneuma hagion”. Caligula claimed to be, as Philon reports, more than a man, and he ordered his statue as “Zeus Epiphanes Gaios” put into the temple of Jerusalem. The Xristos was also an Epiphanes, but he did not need an apotheosis of this kind.

The Messianic conceptions challenged directly the Hellenistic epiphanies of kings and rulers of the “gentes”, of “ta ethne” of the Gentiles. But in challenging them they adopted similar concepts, they were only applied to different beings. The times of Julian Caesarism were the eschatological epoch, the most powerful epoch before the ultimate fall. The holy Davidide kingdom was opposed to eternal Rome. The offshoot of David introduced the last age of mankind, the opposite of Roman greatness and corruption. This corruption, the disappearance of civic virtue was admitted by enlightened Romans. The Jews of the Diaspora imagined that the Messianic age had arrived because they needed it, but the Gentiles of Rome needed it just as badly, if for different reasons. The restoration of the glory of Israel “predicted” by the prophets of the Septuagint was meaningless to them. They needed a meaningful life and a meaningful death. The first “man” (Adam— which means “homo” or “anthropos”, *adama* means earth; and Hava, Eva means the living) allegedly possesses immortality, but lost it because of his “sin”. The “Xristos”, the “Epiphanes” regained the immortality of Adam, he died and was resurrected, and in so doing showed that by belief in him the believers could also regain immortality, merely by belief in him. This philosophical generalization of the meaning of the myth about the first man, the theory of the original sin and its abolishment, was carried through by an adept of the Xristos called Saul or Paul, who allegedly stemmed from the Asiatic city of Tarsus where there were many Jews and adepts of Messianism. The Gentiles needed a “pharmakon athanasias” (a drug of immortality), and this was given them, as an early Christian said later on, by the Xristos. Christianity was a “pharmakon tes athanasias” while the end of pagan life was the shadows of Hades. Paul, the so-called apostle of the Gentiles, transformed the tribal Messianism of the Jews into the more existential Messianism valid for other people, he generalized it. He founded the theology of Christianity and made it a cohesive system. But to do it he had to accept the myth of Adam as an historical fact. But all apostles are fictional and Paul

of Tarsus seems to be the only historical apostle; Luke dignified him with a biography like the other gospel writers honored the Xristos, and he too constructed a biography of the Xristos or Messiah. To Luke the history of Paul, i.e. the so-called *Praxeis Apostolon*, is almost as important as the history of the Xristos himself. In any event the other apostles are largely names, not human beings; they are a mythical symbolization as representatives of the 12 tribes of Israel, but then Paul is only the thirteenth, and it is just he who seems the only apostle or disciple of Christ. No other "apostle" contributed anything to the Christian belief. It seems that there was never a Jerusalem community or a company of 12 apostles. The name of Simon Petrus is largely mythical and symbolical; his assumed name "Petrus", the translation of Kephas, is, of course, symbolical, and it is interesting that a traitor is added among the apostles and he has the name Judah, i.e. Jew. He is the traitor and the Jew, which shows that the authors of the gospels were non-Jews. Paul knows nothing about such a traitor, just as he does not know the gospels; they were a later work of religious fiction.

The name of Judah as the traitor is only an example of the symbolic meaning of the New Testament names including that of the Xristos himself. There is an inextricable mixture of historical and mythical names in the New Testament, but one thing is obvious: The Messianic movement could not be an opposition to the Jewish establishment in Jerusalem, but to the imperial establishment in Rome; Messianism could not be an opposition to Judaism, of which it is a part, although this is the impression derived from the reading of the gospel texts. These writers have a running polemic with the Pharisees, the synhedrium, the archpriest, etc., but these are not the opponents or the counterpart of Messianism, although the apostle Judah is the symbolization of Jewish fraud. In the New Testament legends are built around names, it is a rather crude form of symbolism. Judah, the Jew, is the traitor, the only Judean among the apostles, while all the others are Galileans; he is the "Ephialtes" or another figure of treachery similar to those of Greek history. But he is a fictional person, a literary creation, which has to symbolize Jewish perversion or screen the Roman crime of crucifixion; they, the Romans, are the crude instruments and he is the traitor and perpetrator. The Xristos preached openly and did not hide. So why is a traitor needed to denounce him? It is true that he was largely unknown, a provincial preacher, and therefore Judah had to identify him. He forms the fictional contrast to the other disciples. His end is terrible but has two versions. According to the gospel of Matthew (27,5), he hanged himself—which is a dishonorable death—after having repented and thrown his payment, the silver pieces, in the Temple; but according to St. Luke, who has a more vivid imagination, he bought for the money he received from the Jewish authorities (see *Praxeis Apostolon*, 1,18) a piece of ground called *Hakeldama*—a field of blood—in their own language, *te idia dialekto auton*, as the apostle Peter says, in whose

mouth this speech is put; but the author Luke seems to overlook that this was not in “their” language, but also in Peter’s own (although not in Luke’s) language. Thus he seems not to consider Peter an ethnic Jew. So what was he? As for the end of Judah, a fictional person may have two versions of his death. Now, according to Peter, Judah “burst asunder . . . and his bowels gushed out” on the *Hakeldama*. This is Luke’s sadistic imagination.

The story of the apostles is largely fictional; it seems that there was only one apostle, Paul, who was not a true apostle, since he was not ordained by the Xristos, but had only a vision of the Xristos. Petrus has three names, Simon, Kephass and Petros which is a Greek translation of Kephass, meaning “stone” or “rock”, the foundation stone on which the church of the Xristos was built. Simon is a real name, while the others are symbolically added. They prove that when the story about “Petrus” was invented, there was already a sort of “church” in existence. Why Shaul (Saul) of Tarsus is known by a Latin name, Paulus, in the Greek form Pavlos, is not clear. The similarity of sound is slight. But he is a Roman citizen—about which much fuss is made by St. Luke—and citizen means in Greek “polites”, where the first syllable “pol” is almost the same as in Paul. So he is the pol-ites Paulos. Saul and Paul have, naturally, a similarity in sound. Paul himself knows only three apostles: Kephass or Petros, Iakobos (James), the brother of the Lord, and John, the beloved disciple of the Lord. Thus there is in addition to Io-annes the Baptist another Io-annes. What happened to all the others? Have they died? Paul was in Jerusalem three years after the miraculous conversion by the vision of the Xristos, and stayed there with Kephass 14 days. He also saw Iakobos. Fifteen years later he came to Jerusalem a second time. This is mentioned in the *Letter to the Galatians* attributed to Paul. This story is told to prove that he derived his apostolic office directly from the Xristos and not from the other apostles. Therefore he tarried 3 years before he came to Jerusalem for the first time. The second time he expounded this to the Jewish community in Jerusalem to their satisfaction; and then the world was divided, Peter kept the mission among the Jews and Paul was told to keep the mission among the Gentiles; Paul became their apostle. Thus the authenticity of his office was also recognized in Jerusalem. But this whole story is told to prove the authenticity of his office, which is doubtful, because he was not ordained by anybody. This story is therefore invented to cure this defect. He probably never was in Jerusalem, and he saw no disciples of Christ. When there was a meeting of Paul and Peter in Antioch, one of the centers of early Christianity, Paul is even said to blame Peter for inconsistency and insincerity in observing the Jewish dietary laws. This story extols Paul and degrades Peter, but is merely a reflection of the existence of dissensions between the Jewish and Gentile members of the saints. Since there are no authentic writings of the disciples of Christ, their personalities, with the exception the exception of Judas—who is a symbol of Judaism—are very hazy.

Thomas appears only in St. John with his doubts about the resurrection of Christ, and this is obviously directed against others who doubted it, as Paul's letters show, according to whom such a disbelief would undermine the Messianic religion. Strangely enough, the same Thomas wants to go to Judea with the Lord and die with him. Peter appears as vacillating and weak and in Luke's *Acts* even as not sincere and not as radical in his belief as Paul, to whom probably later on non-Jewish Christians attributed the denial of the validity of Jewish law.

The evangelization of the whole Roman Empire could not be achieved by Paul and still less by the Jerusalem alleged apostles destined to convert the Jews of Judea. There must have been numerous centers of the Messianic faith before and after Paul. This was possible because the number of Jews within the Roman Empire was relatively much greater than their numbers today, compared with non-Jews. Flavius Josephus cites Strabo who states, that there are Jews in every city of the Roman world, especially in Egypt and Lybia. Flavius Josephus states in a so-called speech (*Jewish War*, 2,16): "Furthermore the danger will hit not only you in Jerusalem, but also the Jewish inhabitants of other cities since there is no city on earth where a number of your compatriots do not live. The enemy will slaughter them all because of your rebellion." Elsewhere he states that three million people came for the pilgrim holidays to Jerusalem, and this means men alone. Even if all these numbers and assertions are exaggerated, it is known that Italy had at that time around 10 million and Rome—the greatest city of the Empire—1 million inhabitants. The numerical importance of the Jews in the ancient world was relatively different from the present one. Thus the Messianic movement could spread through them everywhere in the Roman Empire, especially in the East, and in Rome itself. Paul was not the apostle of the Gentiles, since at first he converted both Jews and Gentiles; he could not abolish the validity of Jewish law for the Jews but for the Gentiles, since he considered the Messianic faith as the Messianic completion of the Jewish faith. The general abolishment of this validity was a work of a later stage, when the Gentiles formed a majority of the members of the Messianic faith, namely after the destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem, which is also a watershed for the N.T. writings—the distinction of those written before and those written after the destruction. When after the Jewish War (68–70, A.D.) the Jews became a minority among the Messianic believers in the Diaspora, acceptance of Christianity would have meant for them absorption within Hellenism, just as in the time of the Maccabees in the Syrian Empire. But this defeat was the greatest advantage for Christianity and the strongest motive of its rejection by the Jews. If the Temple still stood and the theocratic Jewish state existed, Christianity could never have achieved the independence and self-sufficiency it did after the holocaust of 70 A.D. There could always be a rebuttal of the Messianic faith, with the

justification that no Messianic changes appeared in the world, no new sky, no new earth, were created, and the glory of Israel was not restored. Now, however, the “saints” could proclaim the destruction of the Temple and the city as the punishment for the execution of the Messiah and no rebuttal was possible from Jerusalem because it ceased to exist and the Jews were punished by the Romans with new tributes.

The rewards promised by the Pauline faith in the Xristos were most important for the Gentiles, but less so for the Jews. The former needed most the “*pharmakon tes athanasias*”, the most desirable individual immortality, which was a selective one awarded only to the believers in the Xristos and in his resurrection which guaranteed their future resurrection. But according to Flavius Josephus, the Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul and the Essenes did so most emphatically. This gift could have no such meaning for them as for the Gentiles, who lacked this belief and such a guarantee. Christianity therefore gave them what they desired most.

The adoption of the Messianic religion by the Roman world saved the ancient culture from total destruction after the irruptions of the Germanic tribes, but certain Jewish customs prominent among the original Jewish Christians had to be eliminated before the creed of the saints became acceptable to the Gentile public, especially the dietary laws and circumcision. Tribal customs (*mores*) and simultaneously religious beliefs now were abolished by means of the Messianic theory, which is a mixture of Jewish and Hellenistic beliefs as it arose in the lands of the Jewish Diaspora in antiquity. The Messiah of the gospels is modelled on the excerpts from the Prophets, which could be construed as predictions. They combined two contradictory figures: the kingly descendant of David and the Suffering Messiah of Deutero-Jesiah; the birth of the Messiah was miraculous by a Virgin touched by the Holy Breath. This is a Hellenistic interpretation of the Holy Breath (*pneuma hagon*). There are some contemporary additions to the portrait of the Messiah of the Gospels, because the biography—without being any—had to conform to the Roman times. The most important was the description of his death, the most cruel form of death invented by the Roman state for the capital punishment of its slaves, the “*supplicium servile*”. The teachings of Christ (a form of quietism, boundless humility, patient forbearance, asceticism, which, however, became more outspoken in Pauline beliefs) were teachings proclaimed to people unable to resist state authority and social hegemony, the only way of life and means of survival proper for slaves and women. The death of the Messiah on the cross projects the state of slavery into divinity; it is the most sublime symbol of compassion, the divine King turned into a slave and a slave becoming a God. But at a time when the Romans crucified great numbers of people for political reasons—Flavius Josephus reports an incident during the great uprising when two thousand Jews were crucified by them—who would care or notice the death of a solitary

preacher after the decapitation of John the Baptist by a semi-Jewish tetrach (Herodes)? The acceptance of ultimate suffering and any humiliation are compensated by the will to suffering and the rewards in the beyond. The deified dying slave is not only the most sublime conception of suffering on earth, it had the deepest social connotation; without mentioning it, it is the moral sanctification of the persecuted and oppressed, the pariah in the Roman state.

To many Jews familiar with the Messianic prediction it must have been disturbing that the eschatological conditions predicted did not materialize. How then could they accept the interpretation of the new community of saints, namely that the Messiah has already arrived? Although nothing was changed on earth, neither Israel nor the world? A predicted new coming of the Messiah, the parousia, did not figure in their known traditions, but was a logical conclusion for Christians. Although the Roman world stood firmer than ever, the glad tidings of the coming realm of the Messiah were asserted. Although the writers of the gospels tried to make the biography of Christ conform to the prophetic texts, the interpretation was dubious, and the Gentile inhabitants of the Eastern provinces of the Empire and of Rome itself were more likely to be susceptible to the new preachings than the Jews themselves. The doctrine of non-resistance to Caesar could appeal to Jews less than to the lowly classes of Gentiles. In its ultimate form the idea of epiphany, the descent of a god, superseded the Messianic element, and it was purely Hellenistic. It stated that God descended on earth to sacrifice Himself as man, to resurrect, and to restore eternal life to man. The Pharisees and especially the Essenes believed in such an eternal life even without the descent of God. The divine incarnation, the central idea of Christianity was not Jewish. The central metaphysical idea of the Christian—i.e. Hellenistic Messianism, of the Messianic faith—was the assumption that the Xristos, the Messiah, was an Epiphanes, i.e. a god incarnate. This belief was not Jewish, although it may have been dialectically deduced from the Jewish prophetic writings, but to the Jews it was absurd and in fact blasphemous. The non-Jewish Christians knew this very well, therefore they put this assertion (son of God) into the speeches of the Xristos and say that the Jews accused him of blasphemy. But this accusation concerns and is directed against the Gentile Christians and not against the Xristos. He is assumed to say that because they—the Hellenistic Christians—said so. This was their theory, not his. To the Jews these were pagan concepts, only they were asserted by the supporters of the Xristos, not by him. This divinity of the Xristos led logically—in conjunction with the text of the Septuagint—to the theory of virgin birth. The latter means fertilization by the holy breath, a mystic but crudely materialistic belief, a belief that implies also the materiality of the spirit; it is a substitution of carnal processes by analogous spiritual ones. This is a vulgarized Hellenistic biology, a biology of the people of antiquity. The state-

ment of the introduction of the gospel after John, that Logos became flesh, is a higher form of epiphany. But this is nothing else than an interpretation from *Genesis* that God created the world by his word; this is the meaning of the statement that the logos became flesh. The epiphany of the Hellenistic beliefs is more specific; it means an insemination and fertilization of a woman by the mere breath of God, a hypostatized spiritual insemination. A Jewish woman—not a Davidide—is the elected vessel of the epiphanic process, which adds characteristically to the dignity of the female sex, usual only in metropolitan centers of advanced civilization. The prophecies of the Septuagint led to this role of a Jewish woman, nevertheless, the Xristos himself was de-judeized, since being a god incarnate or a son of God, he was not a full Jew. The idea of epiphany shows why the Jews rejected the faith of the epiphany; it was not Jewish but Hellenistic, it led to affirmation of the virgin birth of the Messiah. The divinity of the Messianic rites, especially of the eucharist—but also of the other sacraments—was derived from the idea of epiphany. This idea must have been to the Jews the original sin of the pseudo-Messianic faith. The Gentile Christians rejected even the clear prescriptions of the Torah, instituted by a holy man, Moyzes, all of which could not be tolerated. The most far-reaching development of the epiphany was the idea of the Holy Trinity. This idea is not introduced by the New Testament, it is merely deduced from it by imaginative Greek or Hellenistic minds. In this idea of Athanasios, sponsored by Constantine the Great, a pagan, at the council of Nicaea in Asia Minor, where most Christians lived, we have a triune God, called the God-Father, his incarnate Son, plus their spirit, which is the *pneuma hagion*. As the son is the spirit incarnate of the father, and the holy spirit a spirit of both of them, this is a multiplication without multiplicity, it is the same thing repeated thrice, a Hellenistic Oriental sophism. God and his earthly epiphany are one person and their spirit does not add any additional person.

In later times, in medieval and postmedieval Europe, this trinity, which is metaphysical, was transformed into a biological trinity—that of the Holy Family composed of Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

To the ancient Jews the idea of epiphany must have appeared most shocking, it was the main point of the conflict with Rome when an Emperor wanted to become a Zeus Epiphanes in the Jewish temple. But in Syria and Egypt the divine epiphany in kingly persons was quite common. Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings are Epiphanes (manifested god), Theos (god), Eusebes (the highly revered,) Eupator (the Holy Father), etc.; this is official in Syria, and in Egypt there is also an Epiphanes, so why shouldn't there be one also in Judea, where there were such holy kings as David or Solomon mentioned in the Septuagint?

In the Athanasian system of the Trinity, the biological particulars are washed away, Father and Son are two metaphors—philosophically speaking—

Father, son and holy spirit are symbols, the shadowy Xristos of the gospels, his passion disappear here to make room for Hellenistic abstractions. The real Xristos is far away, he is 10 generations distant, he becomes an abstraction, within an abstraction, and there are no Jews in Jerusalem any more. The totality of the Trinity may symbolically stand for Power (Father), Love (Son) and Wisdom (Holy Spirit), transformations for three main powers of Being, willing, feeling and thinking. These are the active, the passive and the cognitive principles. The Virgin could not enter the Trinity of Hellenism because she was not deified thus far; but she, the mother of the new Moyzes, bore the name of the sister of Moyzes, Miriam, and perhaps she was originally thought of as Jesus' sister. But in the most ancient Polish religious hymn she is addressed as biological mother of God "Bogu Rodzica-Dziewica" (of God the Genitress-Virgin). The Messiah is a Supermoyzes, a higher kind of Moyzes, so that he could only be a son of God. The similarity of the designations "meshiach", "Jeshua", and "Moysheh" (Xristos-Jesus-Moyzes) in Hebrew should be noticed. The Xristos really has no proper name, no place of birth. His name Yeshua means "help" or "salvation". The flight to Egypt represents a reflection of the exodus from Egypt to liberty; it is here in reverse, but it means the flight of the Messiah or Xristos to liberty. Here the connection with the myth of Moyzes and the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and the symbolic liberation of mankind by the Messiah, furthermore, the connection of the whole story with the celebration of the Passah feast (Easter), is apparent. Named like the successor of Moyzes (Yeshua, Joshua), he is the second Joshua and the second Moyzes. The story of the Xristos is a reformulation of the story of Moyzes, its combination with the prophecy of the coming of a Messiah and its adaptation to the conditions in the Roman Empire. The old symbol of the Messianic (Christian) belief, the fish, which is an acronym of the words "Iesus Xristos theou hyios, soter" (Jesus Christ [Messiah] son of God, savior) shows that the story was elaborated in a Greek speaking milieu and not in Palestine, since the meaning of the acronym "iXthys" is fish, but only in Greek; and the word "Xristos" as substitute for Messiah is an essential part of the acronym, and Xristos is also a Greek word. The apostles of Jesus are called fishermen, perhaps because they are the supporters of the "Fish" (Jesus), and they are fishermen in seeking the conversion of the non-believers, the "fishermen of souls".

Jeshua (an abbreviation of Je-ho-shua) means salvation, so that Jesus Christus means Salvation-Anointed of God—which is a tautology. The alleged father of Jesus, Joseph, bears the name of the beloved son of Jacob, and he is a Jo-man; the syllable *Jo* appears also in the name of Jo-annes the Baptist, the Jo-annes the beloved disciple of Jesus, the prophet Jo-nah swallowed by a whale and liberated. It is a curious but significant coincidence that the syllable Yah, which means in Hebrew "God", as in Hallelu-yah (Praise the Lord), exists in some Latin names, meaning "light", namely in Ju-piter

(father of light), *Janus* (the god of light), *Jana* or *Diana*, the goddess of light. *Moyzes* had in Hebrew among the Jews the appellation “*Moysheh rabbenu*” (our Lord *Moyzes*); today *Rab* (or *rav*) in Yiddish means a rabbi. In the N.T. this is also the honorific appellation of the *Xristos*. But God himself is also entitled by the Jews colloquially “*rabboni shel olam*” (my lord of the world, an exclamation meaning: oh my God). This shows that this appellation may be applied to God and to men. Viewed as a man Jesus would be *Rab Yeshua bar Yossef*.

If Paulus had been in Jerusalem and talked to the disciples of the *Xristos*, he could give valuable explanations or details about his person. But strangely enough, he does not, and still more strangely, he does not even ask about such particulars, the companions of the *Xristos* allegedly still living in Jerusalem, to say nothing of his mother. Instead he quarrels with them, i.e. with Peter about Jewish dietary laws and other Jewish customs; now this may have been important for the Christian communities in the Roman Empire, but this was not the immediate concern that he should have had talking to the disciples of Christ, he who calls himself his servant. This lack of interest in the life of the Lord is unnatural and not credible, and it destroys the credibility of the whole story about Paulus as apostle of the Gentiles, as a missionary voyager, etc. That he converted Jews, not Greeks, in the first place, is obvious. According to Adolph von Harnack every fourteenth inhabitant of the Roman Empire was a Jew. Furthermore the Jewish Septuagint was the most voluminous body of religious writings at that time. They commanded respect and could have been used as prophetic in the Alexandrian, especially Philonian, sense by the method of symbolic explanation, then modern, which could be adapted to the religious needs of redemption and salvation by a Messianic miracle within the world of Roman corruption and evil. This need lived in the lower classes of the population, among the ethnic strangers, not so much the Romans themselves. But the New Testament was written in Greek and was not addressed to the Roman populace but to the foreigners living in Rome.

The core of these N.T. writings, the four gospels, cannot be demythologized as Rudolf Bultmann thought, the author of a brilliant commentary to the gospel after St. John, because the miracles told in the N.T. are an authentication of the Messianic status of the *Xristos*. He was no messiah before his death because it was his sacrificial death and resurrection that proved that he was the Messiah. During his life this could be shown merely by the miracles, since he did not change the world as the prophets predicted. The miracles were the substitution for this eschatological change. Therefore, the attempts of such people as David Friedrich Strauss or Ernest Renan to construe a biography of the *Xristos* are futile; there are no such biographical data. The four gospels, the core of the N.T., are four versions of one novel, not four biographies. They are propaganda writings destined to prove that Jesus

was the Messiah, and this was proved by the miracles and the resurrection. The Xristos is not a person but a quotation from the Old Testament, or rather he is composed of such quotations and a number of miracles and parables. He is a literary creation of the Hellenistic world, and therefore the Hellenistic world accepted him. He was not foisted on them, they imagined the ideal of the hero and worshipped him. The Christian Pantheon is a collection of martyrs, i.e. of the Crucified and those "witnesses" who testified to his holiness by their sacrifice. There is little wonder that the Hellenistic servants of the Romans sanctified martyrdom as supreme holiness and that God himself was a martyr.

The story was first imagined by the Jews of the Diaspora who were in need of a Messiah and of salvation. The slaves of the Roman masters followed. This is the background of the story, not events in Judea. The "saints" were interested not in the life but in the death (and resurrection) of the Xristos. Paul states in the *Letter to the Romans* (so-called) that they are baptized not on the life but on the death of the Messiah. This means that his death is their salvation. Not the circumcision, the individual bleeding, but the blood of the Messiah is the unifying cement of the New Covenant, the renewal of the ancient one—concluded with Abraham and confirmed by Moyzes and his Legislation! The New Testament starts with the gospel after St. Matthew, which states in chapter 4, that Jesus fasted 40 days and nights in the wilderness, as Moyzes prayed 40 days and 40 nights (see *Deuteronomy*). Jesus is then tempted by the devil, and in chapter 5, 1, he went, also like Moyzes who brings his tablets with the decalogue from a mountain, up the mountain where he had been in communion with God. Here Jesus holds his famous "Sermon on the Mount", and what he says is a reminiscence of the decalogue or other important statements by Moyzes. The sermon starts with the sentence: Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . , etc. (*makarioi hoi ptoxi to pneumati* . . .—"Makarioi" means "fortunate"). This so-called speech opens the so-called "Logia", or utterances of the Xristos. The quoted one is reminiscent of *Isaiah* 57, 15. God says here: I dwell in the high and holy (place) with him also (that is) of a contrite and humble spirit . . . " In other words, this alleged utterance is a reminiscence from the Old Testament. All these utterances were never spoken by any Xristos but are utterances of the preachers in the community assemblies of the "saints". This shows their character. These are words of a preacher talking to his known community, not utterances from a mount to an unknown "multitude". This is all the more evident from such utterances as *Matthew* 5, 13: "hymeis este to halas tes ges . . ." (You are the salt of the earth . . .) Who says such words to an unknown mob assembled at a hill? These are utterances to the personally known members of a community by a preacher. Thus it turns out that there are no Logia of the Xristos. There are once more quotations or reminiscences of the Old Testament or similar sentences which were compiled from the services of the

community, and put here into the mouth of the Xristos, just as in the Old Testament important utterances are attributed to Moses, which heightens their sanctity and importance. Similarly rites which arose in the services of the saints, such as drinking of a holy wine and eating holy bread (eucharist), become usages prescribed allegedly by the Xristos, whereby it may be remembered that the bread is a reminiscence of the bread of God (shewbreads), which lay in the sanctuary of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Another utterance, “*you are the light of the world*”, is here spoken to the multitudes; however, in the gospel after St. John 8,12, Jesus says, “*I am the light of the world*” (*ego eimi to phos tou kosmou*), not *you are* (*hymeis este*). All this is reminiscent of *Isaiah* 49,6, “and I shall give thee *for a light* to the gentiles that thou mayest be my *salvation* until the end of the earth” (venet thathiXa leor goyim lihyoth yeshuathi ad kozei haarez). Now if we deduce from the alleged life of the Xristos first the miracles and then the utterances, what is left to style him a founder of a religion, *apart from his death*? In the above Hebrew sentence, the word *Yeshuathi* (my salvation) is the function of the Jesus (Yeshua), and according to Matt. 1,21, it is said, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people for their sins.” This shows that this name was invented by the saints to show that already his name proved his Messianic quality. It is therefore no real given name. It is a name meaning “Savior”, invented for the story of salvation. Jesus, as the Hellenized transliteration of Yeshua, menas the function of the Xristos. The initial of this designation, beginning with a cross *X* obviously suggested that he was crucified. As Paul’s *Letter to the Romans* knows nothing about the form of his death, the story of crucifixion was the result of a later speculation of Hellenistic (Roman) believers about the form of his assumed death. All gospels are written after the destruction of Jerusalem and the extermination of its inhabitants by the Romans, when it was impossible to know anything about the alleged death of the Xristos.

The *Letter to the Romans*, the most important doctrinal document of ancient Christianity, attributed to Paulus and acknowledged as a synthesis of Christian faith by Melancton, does not mention any crucifixion of the Xristos, the kind of death he took upon himself. The pictorial representations of the crucifixion were made first in the sixth century. That the Messiah was crucified may have been suggested by the fact that his Greek designation Xristos begins with the initial *X* (in Greek) which has the form of a cross. This would also show that the story of the crucifixion was imagined in the Greek speaking world, not in Judea. From being a Jewish Messiah he evolved to the Xristos of the Hellenistic world. Here he was awarded with the initial of his office, the end of the Divine Slave in the Roman Empire.

He is a Nazarene, i.e. allegedly from Nazareth. The question is why the Messiah should come from Galilaea, which means a frontier province? It would be more appropriate, according to the prophecies, if he were a Judean

and/or a priest like John the Baptist. But the Baptist was a Nasir—i.e. a holy man devoted to the Lord who did not cut their hair like Samson. This Nasireanism may have been understood by Gentiles as a city name—Nazareth, or simply chosen because of the assonance. So the Nasir became a Nazarene. The writers of the gospels were non-Jewish Orientals, and perhaps they confused a Nasir with a Nazarene. Nazareth lies in Galilaea and in the vicinity of the Lake Ge-nezareth, which is also similar in sound, so he performs miracles on this lake and his disciples (the apostles) are fishermen on this lake. Being a Nasir like the Baptist he becomes a Nazarene. (The Hebrew appellation for Christians was Notzrim, i.e. Nazarenes.) His disciples were all Galileans (apart from Judah), and they were fishermen, probably metaphorically speaking, but this is a literary problem: how did the Gospel writers see them?, not what they really were? The death of the Messiah is a mysterious thing. According to the Christian theory, he has saved and had to save mankind with his blood, i.e. with his death and resurrection. It follows that as long as he did not die he did not achieve his sacrifice and could not save mankind. But this means also that as long as he is not dead (and resurrected), his Messianic quality cannot be acknowledged. It follows that he must always be dead, at least for those believers who did not know his miracles to identify him. In general, the Messiah could be identified by the Messianic revolution, i.e. the renewal of earth and heaven. But this renewal did not occur through the Xristos. Therefore his Messianic quality must have been a mystery discoverable only to those who saw or believed in his miracles, his proof of Messianic identity. The difficulty of this belief lies in the unchanged condition of the world, while the eschatological change was the hallmark of the Messianic stage. Therefore a second coming—or a parousia—had to be imagined for the completion of that eschatological change. The first coming did not accomplish it.

The form or the circumstances of this necessary sacrificial death were not specified, so that the gospel writers were free to imagine it. Yet, since the sacrifice was necessary and voluntary, it has no sense to complain about his death or to denounce the murderers. They are not true murderers. In fact, the course of the debate of the Xristos with the procurator Pilatus seems to show that if he wanted he could avoid the condemnation by Pilatus and the extradition to his executioners. Pilatus wanted to save him, and if he wanted he could. Just as his death provided salvation, his resurrection promised the resurrection of all believers in him—i.e. the belief alone awarded eternal life, and in this sense Christian belief was the “pharmakon athanasias”. The Messiah was first to be resurrected, the others were to follow. The resurrection of the Xristos had to precede all other resuscitations. But St. Luke overlooked this fact and he invented the resurrection of Lazarus—as one of the miracles—although this miracle destroyed the deep meaning of the first resurrection of the Lord, which according to St. Paul would guarantee the

resurrection of all the other believers, and hence their eternal life. The author of the *Letter to the Romans* did not know the writings of St. Luke. This story of the resurrection of Lazarus was added by Luke since it is not contained in Mark. The farther the so-called biographers are removed from the events described the richer and the more detailed the description becomes, although it should be the other way around, the eyewitnesses and the contemporaries, the companions, should be the most knowledgeable and the most precise.

The geographical localization of the events in the gospels is very hazy; Nazareth is one example, the Hakeldama where Judah burst asunder and Golgotha where the Xristos was crucified are others. Who has ever heard about such places? But the place of birth of the Xristos is Gal-il and the place of death Gol-gotha. There is an assonance here.

The gospels put into the mouth of the Xristos dire predictions about the end of Jerusalem which, of course, appeared fulfilled, but could they assert in this way the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple as a punishment of the Jews for their disbelief and killing of the Messiah if the Romans had not destroyed Jerusalem? Could the Messianic belief coexist with an unbroken Judaism? This is very doubtful, and here we see the enormous role that the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish society in Judea played in the history of Christianity (and also in the literary history of the New Testament). The destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem became a proof of the authenticity of the Messianic message of the Xristos and of the belief in the Xristos, the destruction a punishment of the Jews by God for the killing of Christ. When the Gentiles became the majority of the "saints" and Jerusalem was destroyed, they could assume the role of judges and censors of the Jews and make "predictions" about the terrible fate of the daughters of Jerusalem put into the mouth of the Xristos. The story of the passion of the Xristos is a novella like the story of Esther or Ruth or Samson and Dalila. Samson, Shimshon, the god of the sun (she-mesh), becomes a national hero, his rays become long hair, he is a Nassir. MardoXai and Esther live at the court of the king of Persia and Esther saves Israel. The novella about the death of the Messiah ended first with his death, but was enriched later with the story of his resurrection when the latter assumed a doctrinal importance as a guarantee of the general resurrection and eternal life of the believers. The Judeophobic writers of this story—who were Hellenistic Orientals—did not go so far as to accuse the Jews of the crucifixion of the Messiah; they left this to the Romans but accused the Jews of plotting the death with the aid of the Judean traitor Judah.

In his book *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (Anchor Books, Garden City, second edition, 1964), Theodor H. Gaster states that the basic Christian doctrinal tenets such as eucharist, etc., do not figure in these religious writings. This is

correct but the reason is plain: these tenets were not the work of the Jews in Israel but of the Hellenistic writers outside Judea. The Dead Sea writings represent a state of mind when this expectancy of the Messiah may have existed, while the Christian writings represent the state of mind when it was asserted that the Messiah has already come. The life in the desert of the ascetic (probably Essene) communities was thought to be the fulfillment of the law of Moses, while that of the Hellenistic writers was the abrogation of that law. The appearance and the killing of the Messiah were interpreted as reasons for that abrogation, which was natural enough among strangers who abhorred Jewish customs, such as circumcision, etc., which, however, had acquired for the Jews an important religious, i.e. symbolic meaning. Therefore, there is such a passionate discussion about them in Antioch between Peter and Paul, i.e. between the man chosen as a representative of the Gentiles (Paul) and the representative of the Jewish version of Christianity.

But here it should be mentioned that the main difference between the ascetic Jewish communities and the early Christian communities, of which the former were the main reservoir of membership, lay not in the way of life but merely in the question whether the Messiah has or had not arrived. Thus since the ascetic Jewish groups and the Messianic groups of the so-called “elect” and “saints” were similar in conduct and speech, in the religious expressions, it was not easy to distinguish them. They spoke about the sons of light, enlightenment, etc., in a similar vein as later on the believers in a Messiah and even their “good teacher” (*moreh zedek*) may have been called in Greek *Xrestos*, the Good one; he may also be called the Good Shepherd, since the teacher is also the guide (*moreh*), the Torah or Lore is also the Light. If then the *Xristos* says in the gospel of John, “I am the Light of the world”, he replaces by so saying the Torah or the Holy Writ; he is the incarnation of God’s Writ. If then Luke tells the story of the conflict between Paul and Peter, this may not only relate to the differences of interpretation of the dietary laws but of the whole role of the *Xristos*. Is he merely the *Xrestos* or the *Xristos*? Is the so-called community of the saints in Jerusalem a community of ascetic Essenes like that of Qumran, or do they recognize the Messianic hermeneutics of Paul, i.e. of the Gentile “saints”? This would explain better the silence of Paul about the person of *Xristos* and the alleged conflict about Jewish law. And if he sees in Jerusalem only three “apostles”, this is explained by the fact that three priests were the heads of such an Essenian community, while twelve elders or presbyters—the “apostles”—were the leaders of the groups according to the Pentateuch (Num. 3,4), Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar form the triumvirate of priests; the three apostles (Kephas, Iakobos and Ioannes) in Jerusalem seem to be the last reminiscence of it. The 12 apostles seem, however, to represent the genuine “remnant of Israel”. There are also “overseers” of the commu-

nity, or in Greek *episcopoi* (in Hebrew: *mebaqqerim*), the primitive model of the bishops. To some extent this whole Essenian hierarchy is in some way or other reproduced in primitive Christianity. The Essenian angle explains the rapidity of the spread of Christianity, because such ascetic communities of Jews, whatever their name: Essenians, *Ebionim* (the poor, i.e. the ascetics) existed in many parts of the Roman Empire. This is attested by Philo and Flavius Josephus. The appellation "Essenes" must not have been the one they bore, they may have called themselves "the saints", "the elect", etc. Theodore H. Gaster deduces the name "Essenes" from *Ezzah* (council, counsel), and sees this same appellation in the Palestinian-Aramaic "eda", which meant church. The word Essenes seems to have been attached to them by outsiders. The New Testament knows Pharisees and Sadducees but not Essenes. This would be comprehensible if they were themselves Essenes and as such opposed to the Pharisees as impious and insincere. The first *Letter of Ioannes* seems to point in this direction. He states that some of the members of the community do not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and this would be understandable if this proto-Christian community was not originally Christian but ascetic-Jewish, Essenian, so that some of the members did not accept the Messianic message (*kerygma*). This would also explain why Paul persecuted the "Christians"; he was not an Essenian but a Pharisee by upbringing. It would also explain the doctrinal conflicts in the original church communities and the adoration of light in the Ioannite tradition as synonym of divinity, of the Torah first, then of God, then of the Messiah. Moral theories common to Essenes and Christians would also be more understandable, the "love" natural in a community of ascetics, the absence of love as a great sin, humility of ascetics before God and as a consequence before men. This ideology of the Essene ascetics is only expressed more radically in the New Testament.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., anything told about events that preceded it could neither be proved nor disproved, so that a wide field was open to religious writers. The Jews themselves always termed such events as punishments for sins and transgressions, disobedience to God. Why should the believers in the Messianic message not term the destruction of Jerusalem as punishment for the rejection of the Messianic message? But if the Xristos was to save the world not only with his spirit and with water but also with blood, he must have been killed in Jerusalem, because otherwise he would still be there. Since, furthermore, some men are descended from God and some from Satan, those who killed him descended from Satan. It is to be stressed that what the belief in the Messiah Jesus guaranteed was "eternal life", and this was all the more important as the great change, the end of the world, was near. A murderer could not attain eternal life, but if a virtuous man believed in the Messiah Jesus, eternal life was assured to him. The idea of an eternal life depending merely on a belief is a specific Christian

idea; the underlying idea is that moral factors may assure immortality both ways, eternal bliss or eternal condemnation. There is no doubt that the Essenes entertained similar beliefs, but they were not linked with the belief in the arrival of the Messiah, the keypoint in the Christian theology, but the holiness in this life was rewarded by bliss in the life beyond. Holiness was the scrupulous obedience to the Torah, the Divine Law, but for the Gentiles who had no Torah the Xristos replaced it. He was the light of the world. This is an anthropomorphic incarnation of the Divine Law.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, when non-Jews became the majority of the “saints”, the opposition to the Jewish establishment from being religious, as under the Jewish-Essenic majority, became not only religious but ethnic; the “saints” were mostly Hellenistic Orientals or Greeks and Romans, and the co-nationals of these Orientals massacred the Jews in Alexandria, Caesarea, Skythopolis, etc., or waged war against them, or were like the Greeks, traditionally opponents of the Jewish way of life. Therefore, the opposition to the Jews as expressed in the gospels has an ethnical, not only a religious connotation. “The Jews” ask for killing of the Messiah, not the *opponents* of Messianism. What was in proto-Christianity opposition to the Jewish establishment but still mainly the opposition to Roman paganism is redirected into anti-Judaism, so that it seems that the true enemies of the Messianic movement are not the heathen but the Jews, the ruling Herodes much more than the Roman Pilatus. But Herodes the Great was hated by the Jews as semi-Jew and tyrant, who killed most of the last members of the Hasmonean royal family, even his wife, but he made no massacre of children in Bethlehem. The latter is invented to show the miraculous escape of the Messiah. The Samaritans were neither worse nor better than the Jews, and if stories are invented to show that they were better the ethnic prejudice is obvious. That the main body of religious, but not ascetic Jews, was opposed to the idea of Messianism is probable, they formed the conservative but not the most conservative section of Jewry. Most Jews were Pharisees. But such party distinctions lost much of their meaning in the Dispersion. Paul’s *Letter to the Romans* shows no special opposition to them. He does not know in his main *Letter* (to the Romans) that the Messiah was crucified, he does not mention it at all. But this was written before the fall of Jerusalem.

The gospel stories of the passion of the Xristos contain a deep unbridgeable contradiction. The mystical self-sacrifice of the Messiah who redeems the sins of mankind, and especially that of Adam, is turned into a realistic story of a tragedy—of the persecution, betrayal and capture, finally of a “trial” and an execution. But this change or transmutation poses inexplicable problems. The unknown Galilean preacher raises too much commotion in the story, he is judged by the highest authorities in Judaism, and then even by the Roman procurator in person. It is not clear whether the accusation is blasphemy or rebellion. Pilatus was hated by the Jews and they

demanding from Rome his removal, which they achieved. Here they turn to this Roman evildoer for the condemnation of a fellow Jew and petition even for that this governor. He is all of a sudden more just than the Jewish authorities, but they prevail because the mobs in the street intervene. This whole presentation of the trial is not credible. This is the caricature of a Jewish or a Roman trial. It is known from Flavius Josephus that Pilatus was one of the most hated procurators in Jerusalem. The whole story looks like fiction invented to accentuate the guilt of the Jewish authorities and even to exculpate the Roman procurator as far as possible. The whole of the dramatic presentation looks like fiction, not like a report from courts of law. If this was such a famous trial, Flavius Josephus knows nothing about it nor does any other historian of that time.

Jewish Messianism which was eschatological, politico-religious and socially collective could not satisfy, in its original form, the Hellenistic population; it had to be extended and generalized to become existential and concern not only ethnic Israel but a religious Superisrael; this transformation is connected with the name of Paulus. This new Messianism was not to restore the glory of ethnic Jews but to guarantee to all believers, regardless of descent, eternal life; this was the key demand and had to be satisfied by the Messiah through his sacrifice of blood similar to the sacrifices in the Temple, but much more efficient and abolishing all the sins—not single transgressions—namely the original sin of Adam. This new Messianism culminated in the promise of eternal life, while the Hellenistic people rather feared eternal death. They were therefore liberated from the latter. The other corollaries of life of the Jewish ascetic communities had not to be changed; they were asking for humility before God, and as a consequence, also before men, for brotherly love to each other, and for sexual purity. The difference between the pre-Christian Jewish ascetic societies or sects and the proto-Christian groups consisted merely in the belief that the Messiah has come and gone. The Hellenistic groups were obviously not satisfied with the eternal expectancy of the Messianic age familiar to Jews, their spiritual need for immortality or eternal life had to be satisfied earlier; it could only be so satisfied if the promised Messianic prophet or archpriest (*Letter to the Hebrews*) or the Logos that became a man (*Ioannes*) was realized. This coming of the Messiah was to be assumed all the more as the saints lived in a way showing that God dwelt among them anyway. But this coming and going was invisible, it had to be believed; and this faith was the essential part of the Christian Messianism. The Messiah was always dead (and resurrected in heaven) since otherwise his sacrifice would not have been accomplished, so that his coming and going was not a matter of evidence but of faith. Hence the stress on faith. This is the Messianic “secret” on which the gospel insists; it is a secret not to be divulged among those who did not want to believe it, only scorn could have been reaped among them. This was true especially of the Phari-

sees, i.e. of the Jewish establishment; and the Qumran papers show that the opposition to it was very strong among the ascetics. But this opposition had a purely religious character, while it assumes in the gospels, written by non-Jews, a palpable ethnic character.

No Messianic movement could have ever arisen in the Hellenistic world without the active initiative of the Jewish communities, Essenian or otherwise, because they were the carriers of the Messianic tradition; yet in the Greek gospels there is not even a hint of this fact, while they are stylized so as to condemn the Jews as the true enemies of this movement. This would be entirely incomprehensible, but for the fact that the Hellenistic Orientals, the Romans and Greeks, were obstinate enemies of the Jews who believed that they were the possessors of the only truth, while the heathen were ignorant despite their worldly education. The massacres of the Jews not only in Syria, but also in Egypt, in Lybia and elsewhere, the devastation and extermination of a great part of the Jewish people in the war of 68–70 let the persecutions of the Christians appear as minuscule. But these were massacres of ethnic and religious aliens, while the persecution of the Christians under Diocletian could not have any ethnic connotation and were of short duration. The opinion that the ancient Greeks and Romans or Orientals, such as Egyptians, etc., were tolerant in religious or ethnic matters is erroneous. This legend arose by lack of comprehension for the direction of their intolerance. They were completely pitiless and the Romans even sadistic in their treatment of slaves, gladiators, prisoners of war, etc. The assumption often heard among historians that the European or other nations became intolerant owing to Christianity, while their pagan ancestors were paragons of humanity, is false; they remained intolerant despite Christianity, which could convert small groups of “the elect” but not whole nations. The Christianization of whole states is a socio-political not a religious problem. When the circus viewers of Rome became thousands of beggars, this was not a religious but a socio-political transformation. It is silly to say that whole populations embraced Christianity or any other “faith”.

The central point of the Messianic faith was the descent of Deity in a human shape on earth. This was, of course, a miraculous occurrence of enormous importance (to those who believed it). This is the Hellenistic idea of epiphany (“epiphaneia”) of God descending to earth in human shape, and this was amalgamated with the Jewish idea of the coming of a Messiah; according to the prophecy of *Deuteronomy* 18, 15–18: “God will raise unto you a prophet . . .” These are the words of the prophecy of Moses. As he was the legislator, the Christian Messianists followed, that the new prophet will also be a legislator, a new Moses who will abolish the old law and institute a new one, because this is the function of the legislator. This new “prophet” was supposed to be the Messiah, the Xristos, but Messiah was to the Christian Messianists not the Messiah of the Jews but an improvement on

that, namely the *Theos Epiphanes*—the god manifested in a human shape, but this was an Hellenistic, not a Jewish idea. It was more poetic and corresponded to Hellenistic taste. The Xristos became the *Theos Epiphanes*.

What did the Messiah or the Xristos—*Theos Epiphanes*—accomplish for mankind? He liberated mankind from death; he abolished death because he made out of death the door to eternal life—for mankind, i.e. for those who believed in him. This accomplishment is contrary to the evidence of the senses, this is the miraculous secret truth of it. In liberating man from death he also absolved him from original sin, the transgression of Adam. He was the new incarnation of law, the light of the world, and therefore he could abolish the old law of Moses, he was the new Supermoses, a Divinized Moses. His stay on earth was short, and few saw or talked to him, none of those who wrote about him was among them. Therefore you could put into his mouth whatever ideas or sentiments seemed proper.

This is the belief in Xristos reduced to its essentials, it is the gift of eternal life awarded by God himself in human shape who came to renew his covenant with a symbolic non-Jewish Israel. Compared with the teachings of the Stoics or Epicureans, it was an improvement because they believed in eternal death. A highly civilized Roman, the Epicurean poet Horace, stated his faith in these words:

Eheu fugaces Postume, Postume labuntur anni.—furthermore: aequam memento rebus in arduis servare mentem.—finally, non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei vitabit Libitinam.

This means that life passes but we should be steadfast, but he, Horace, hopes that he will survive in his works, and therefore not die entirely. But this is no real survival since he shall know nothing about it. The Stoics were still more pessimistic and meant that death is a liberation, a liberation from life, therefore their suicides when confronting the tyranny of Caesar.

In our time the philosopher Edmund Husserl tried to reduce the philosophical look through epistemology to its essentials to see the fundamentals of life. This was the phenomenological investigation. His disciple, Martin Heidegger, meant that by using this method he found the fundamentals of life, he found the so-called “existentialia”, the basic forms of existence, the Platonic ideas of life; thus what Husserl aimed at, he found. This revelation was somber. The Hellenistic findings of the Xristos were simpler, but this was no longer Judaism; the Judaic literature was merely used to prove the rightness of the Messianic prophecies. The Xristos—*Theos Epiphanes*—came to right the world which as always in Roman times was out of joints—so it seemed at least to the contemporaries. A Xristos was necessary to achieve that reform. This religion is the opposite of Indian beliefs: its aim was not liberation from life as in India—but, on the contrary, the eternization of life, the aim of life was eternal life, not eternal death. Hence loving service

to God, and specially to men was recommended as these were the last, the ultimate times.

It is very characteristic that in the New Testament literature all sorts of doubt that could arise about the truth of the Messianic story are mentioned, even the fact that the world remained unchanged (in the first letter of Ioannes). Often these doubts are attributed to false prophets and a prophet seemed to be almost a profession among the Jews. But the consistent condemnation of the Jews seems to indicate that, (1) the Pharisean mainstream of the Jews resisted the proselytizing by the ascetic sects and (2) that this scission became ethnical.

The story of the trial of the Xristos as told in the gospels is not credible and is historically unfounded. If a Jewish king, Herod, could kill a known holy man, the Baptist, why had his successors to resort to Roman procurators, to the archpriest, to the synhedrion, to get rid of an unknown Galilean preacher? If his transgression was doctrinal, did the Romans intervene in Jewish religious quarrels? Why did they care about them? The gospels' writers seem to be unaware of the fact that Pilate was considered a villain by the Jews, a fiend whose removal they desired and obtained, and it was to him that they turn to condemn a religious transgression? While the Jewish mob and the religious Jewish leaders instigate Pilate to murder the Xristos, he is a weakling who vacillates and even wants to save him? Merely for reasons of Roman "justice"? Josephus Flavius does not picture Pilate in these colors.

The history of the death of the Xristos is full of novelistic traits. He drives out the traders from the Temple. This is not very credible. He was one and they were many. The triple renunciation of Jesus by his disciple Petrus before the crowing of the cock shows the importance of the number 3 and the death kiss of the traitor Judah are impressive novelistic means of writing. Continuous discussions by the Xristos with Jewish "scribes" on points of faith suggest rather such discussions between Jews and other members of the new sect in the future, and the dire prediction of doom of Jerusalem in *Luke* 19,43-44 and 23,28-30, attributed to the Xristos, are prophecies *ex post*, written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This shows clearly the importance of this fact to the Gentile members of the sect of saints.

The doctrine of epiphany developed into that of trinity; the following disputes about homoousia and homoiusia were similar in kind and were passionately discussed. Such discussions about degrees of divinity are typically Hellenistic (and Oriental), they reappear in Plotinus and may have been suggested by the Hellenic hierarchy of gods, semi-gods, etc., while the Jews have only a hierarchy of angels, the messengers of God, who, however, unite sexually with humans and produce hybrid descendants. Was perhaps the Xristos also such an offspring? He was more, a son of God which the *Letter to the Hebrews* relates to a "prophecy" in the Psalms, namely Ps.2.7;

“... the Lord hath said unto me; Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee...” But this is merely a rhetorical figure, a metaphor which God addresses to the prayful; the meaning of this metaphor is interpreted as objective fact. Similarly another figure of speech in Hesekiel “ben-Adam” (son of man) is also used hermeneutically.

The idea of assumption into Heaven is derived from the story of Elijah, the Jewish precursor of the Messiah who was carried away in a carriage of fire; Moyzes was also carried away, he did not simply die, he disappeared and, like the Messiah, preaches from hills and mountains; he spoke from a mountain. Divine origin is attributed to many Hellenistic kings, so why not to the Xristos, who descends from David and is a potential king of Israel? As the divine origin is restricted to Hellenistic kingly personages, the Messiah Jesus is also of Davidide descent, although his realm is not from this earth; but being from heaven he is all the more the true king. The crowning of Jesus with thorns, which is an act of supreme derision, covers up a deep truth, an extra-mundane reality.

The victory of Christianity in the Roman empire is not, as is supposed, a victory of an Oriental cult, but on the contrary this was an indigenous cult of the Hellenistic world formed by Hellenism in a sense corresponding to its mentality. It was victorious because it was native, constructed by the Hellenistic mind on the basis of the prophecies of the Jewish religious books in Greek, i.e. of the Septuagint. The metaphysics of Christianity are those of the Hellenistic world. What is attributed to Paulus as the apostle of the Gentiles is precisely what the Gentile members of the community considered appropriate for them, but as all such beliefs or convictions, they are attributed to one holy man. Jewish law of God has nothing to do with gradation of divinity, which flourished especially in Neoplatonism. Trinity has also a precedent in Hermes Trismegistos. The faith of the Xristos became philosophically motivated by such concepts as original sin, etc. What was in Judaism a story was here generalized into a theory of universal meaning. Symbolic rites like the Eucharist were added and also interpreted as endowed with higher and universal meaning. Jewish faith of the Old Testament was not philosophical and not full of theological speculations.

Jewish rabbis were often craftsmen who exercised as a “part time job” their profession of interpreters of the Law. So the father of the Xristos and he too were carpenters. Why just carpenters? Because God is also a builder, a carpenter of the world. The Xristos in the lore of Christian Hellenism is everything. He is carpenter, he is son of God, he is archpriest (of God), he is son of man, he is Logos, he existed since the beginning of the world, even according to the *Letter to the Hebrews*; the creation of the world went through him and finally he is a king and a simple human being, but these claims are not consistent. Despite his exalted status and perhaps because of it, he dies the death of a Crucified Slave. Thus he identifies himself with the op-

pressed, the poor, the most despised class of men; all the more his ascent to divinity is miraculous and unique, he sanctifies the poor and is sanctified by them. The Hebrew prophets also exalted the poor, the weak, the strangers, the widows, and the orphans, and demanded justice for them. Here this angle of ethics is strengthened, the poor, the slave is divine, in the person of the Xristos.

The faith of the Xristos was never preached to Jews in their homeland, because the geographical and national, the physical and spiritual bases for it, as foreshadowed by the prophets, were lacking there. It could have been merely an importation from the Hellenistic countries, from abroad. The gospel authors wrote no biography of the Messiah; they tried to explain the glad tidings, the message of eternal life, to be given to the faithful in form of a biography of the Messiah, i.e. in a personal way. This was already a metamorphosis for the comprehension of the people. It is quite futile to attempt to convert this version of the glad tidings, the miraculous life of the Xristos, into a materialistic biography, after the manner of historians of human events. The original gospels or glad tidings did not appeal to the mainstream of Pharisaic Judaism as a strange story, and this evoked the anger of the authors of the glad tidings. These glad tidings were couched in form of a tragedy and even a murder committed by the Jews, a story that was unknown to them as a terrestrial event, which they considered as an invention of the Hellenistic thinkers, a merely hostile invention which became a tool of condemnation against them, and was destined to draw them into such temptations as the attempts at Hellenization under the Seleucid kings. What good could they expect of the Greeks, the Hellenophones and the Romans? What they preached was so preached by their sworn enemies who destroyed them. Therefore the complete silence about the whole story in the first centuries of the Christian era. This Messianic story was a hostile story devised by hostile authors who denigrated them and wanted to vent their animosity against them—although in a different form than before, in a subtle form which appeared to confirm the scriptural bases of their own faith, and yet was its denegation.

The names of the personages of the gospels have a symbolic meaning. The name of the Xristos or Messiah is Yeshua, and this name means salvation or help, so it is in this case no real name. It means what the Messiah procures. Furthermore, it is similar to Yeshaia the name of the prophet that predicted the Messianic age; there is even phonetically (not semantically, a triad related to Messiah (*meshiach*): meshiach-Yeshua-Yeshaiah—in triplicate. The alleged main disciple is called Kephas or Petrus and is the rock on which the church was built, but this was said later on. The 12 apostles represent 12 Jewish tribes and the betrayer of the Xristos, Judah, bears a name that means Jew. The flight to Egypt reproduces the flight of Jacob to Egypt whose son Joseph preceded him, but this is also the name of Mary's

husband who accompanied her. But it is at the same time the flight of the Israelites from Egypt in reverse, and the King Herodes is a second Pharaoh in despotism. The historian Strabo thought that the Egyptians were of Jewish descent.

What Neoplatonism—as stages of divinity—expresses abstractly, the New Testament writers express anthropomorphously and biologically, in such terms as father, son, holy breath, virgin maternity, etc., and, while they try often to imitate the style of the Old Testament, they are commentatorial, argumentative, quotational and persuasive; it looks like a secondary literature, and only fragments of all beliefs of the Jewish community are treated. Most of the theories are in the form of dialogues or of utterances put into the mouth of the personages mentioned. The most sustained narrative is that of St. Luke both in his gospel and in the “Acts”. But in general they are a collection of instructive parables, of quotations, alleged utterances of the acting personages. The quotations are used as confirmation of alleged predictions of the events at hand. The miracles cited authenticate the Messianic character of the Master. These miracles are quantitative increases (of breads) or qualitative transmutations (water into wine), healings of the incurable, and even resurrection of dead persons. By his vision of the Christ Paulus, or whoever writes it, described a weaker form of epiphany; Paul is less interested in the life of the Xristos than in his death, and this is comprehensible because it was in dying that the Xristos redeemed the world not in living. The authors of the gospels assign to his ministry such a short time (1–2 years) that he could scarcely achieve very much during that time, but whatever he did, was neither necessary nor essential, since his redemption was the voluntary sacrifice of his life. This act and not his teachings saved mankind and absolved it from its sins. Even if he had said nothing and done nothing, this one deed, namely the sacrifice of his existence, would have been sufficient to accomplish his mission. Therefore the great insistence on the faith in his mission as the paraphernalia of the Messianic change were not evident. So it had always to remain a matter of faith. By dint of the self-sacrifice of Jesus, man—if believing—was to gain eternal life, but since that happened only after death, it was also a matter of faith and not of empirical knowledge. Empirically speaking, the dead remained dead. What changes did the conversion to the Messianic faith produce in the world? Individually it changed the sexual morality of men and women, it demanded sexual purity and condemned perversions. The collective life was not changed for the masses, and wars and bloodshed persisted. But the intellectual life of mankind, its religious philosophy, its art, were changed. Christianity altered the intellectual outlook of mankind, its art, its poetry, and it transformed sexual ethics into ascetic puritanism, if not in fact, at least as a prescription.

Hellenistic mentality having introduced the idea of epiphany into the Messianic religion, it oscillated between epiphany and apotheosis or “*homo-*

ousia" and "homo-iousia" (similarity to God), a Hellenistic philosophical dispute that had nothing in common with old Jewish monotheism. There were two main differences between the Jewish and the Christian Messianism: (1) the shift from the collective and national status of the Messianic world to the existential status of the individual through the introduction of eternal life *pro individuo*, and then through the introduction of the idea of epiphany. The shift *ad* (1) had as the result the insistence on faith and belief; the element, *ad* (2) led to the belief of a virgin birth of the Xristos by a "parthenos" of the Septuagint, to the miracles performed during his life and to the resurrection, because as an *Epiphanes* the Xristos was not subject to natural laws. By the resurrection after death, which was a model of future resurrection of all the faithful, the most tragic aspect of the Hellenistic life, eternal death, was abrogated, abrogated by the fiat of the Messiah or his interpreter Paul, or whoever he was. The Jews, whether believing or not in personal immortality or life eternal, needed it less than the Hellenistic Gentiles, since they believed to repose always in the hands of God. The introduction of the belief in personal immortality was not identical with the abolition of death in general, as envisaged by the Messianic Jewish theory, since this was a general cosmic eschatological *change* in an ontological sense, not a personal privilege granted to some select individuals, not a reward for the acceptance of the Messianic faith. In fact, here was nothing to be accepted or declined, because the cosmic Messianic changes must have been obvious to everybody. Thus the whole system of the Christian Messianism differed profoundly from the ancient Jewish tradition of it.

As every prescription should have a higher authority, the discarding of the Jewish tribal customs (circumcision, dietary laws) was attributed to the so-called apostle of the Gentiles, a holy man, St. Paul, ordained by a celestial vision. This man was necessary as a justification, since such a justification could not be found in the Old Testament writings. His theory was that the Messiah replaces the Law. But the strictures of the Old Testament on sexual perversions were even strengthened by him, because this corresponded to pietists who accepted the faith, among whom the women were very influential. This too was a Hellenistic characteristic in the big cities; it was often opposed and did not exist among the pietist Jewish ascetics.

The Messianic religion is syncretist, in that it is a combination of so-called Old Testament predictions and New Testament theories and rites, but these rites or festive celebrations have been transformed and emptied of Old Testament meanings. The Messiah became an *Epiphanes*, his central celebrations is at Easter—the transformed Passah feast, which celebrates his sacrificial death and resurrection, the liberation from mortality, instead of that from Egyptian slavery. It was a pilgrimage feast with the Jews, but the "saints" did not go to Jerusalem any more, and instead of eating lamb, drinking wine and eating unleavened bread, transformed the Lamb into the symbol of

the Xristos—and the bread and wine meant symbolically his blood that he shed for mankind and the body he gave for them. Thus, in fact, the new faith is emptied of all traditional content to concentrate on the Xristos and the meaning of his sacrifice. The Old Testament predictions predict the contents of the new faith and rites. The gospel after Matthew adds even a genealogy in the Old Testament style to prove the Davidide origin of a man who is the “son of God”. Only Joseph, the husband of his mother, is an alleged Davidide. The origin of this Hellenistic religion is localized in Judea and/or Galilee, the frontier province. But where did it really arise? Has any event in Judea or Galilee prompted it? Or was it rather a collective Messianic movement among the Jewish communities in the Diaspora or their ascetic sects that looked toward the East for such a Messiah who was expected and had to come? The personality of St. Paul would suggest Asia Minor as one of the main centers of localization? But Rome is much richer in archeological relics of Christianity, and its community of Xristos was not founded by Paulus, the man from Asia Minor. How did the Messianic message, the *kerygma*, go, from East to West or in the opposite direction?

There are no Christian relics in Palestine, but there are abundantly in Rome, and there were many Christians first in Asia Minor, the locus of activity of the “apostle of the Gentiles”, who may be the only universal apostle so-called. But was this faith earlier in Asia Minor than in Rome? This seems improbable because the population of the Empire tended toward Rome, where, according to Tacitus, “sentina omnis reipublicae confluit”. Furthermore, the decree of expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 49 A.D. by Emperor Claudius shows that there was a considerable Jewish community there, and the Christians as long as they called themselves “the saints” or “the elect” were still a part of it—they separated when they called themselves “Christiani”, but this happened much later and was done in Antioch, one of their main centers. (If therefore the Jewish King Agrippa is said to talk of “Christianoi” in the *Acts of the Apostles*, this is an anachronism and an interpolation, because there were no “Christianoi” at that time when St. Paul wanted to go to Rome.) The gospels localize the story of the Xristos in Judea, and this is logical since it is in accord with the Old Testament “predictions”. But is there any historical warrant for that? Since Tacitus said “origo huius mali Judaea” (the origin of this evil is Judea), the Judean origin is generally accepted, but a much more probable origin is in the communities of the Jewish Diaspora. The Greek language, of which the Christian literature is composed, points to it, but also the fact that all technical expressions of the faith are set in Greek, not in Hebrew or Aramaic. The Messiah of the gospels is the Xristos, but in order to know that this means Messiah, we must retranslate it into Hebrew, since this is not evident. In all languages the name of the Messiah is derived from Xristos, nowhere from Messiah, so why would Jerusalem be considered the original center of the Messiah, if the “predic-

tions" would not be taken into account? There was obviously no channel of direct communication from him in Jerusalem to show him not as Xristos but as the Messiah. His ambassadors were the "apostoloi", so they were sent out from a Hellenophone place, not from Jerusalem, because what was their technical designation in the language of Jerusalem? Theodore H. Gaster says that the Hebrew "mebaqquerim" of the ascetics of Qumran are in Greek translation "episcopoi", but the bishops were all designated episcopoi, and that there were Jewish predecessors had to be unearthed from the caves of Qumran, otherwise nobody would know these precedents. The "presbyters", in the other languages prete, pretre, priest, Priester, are also derivable from the Greek term, not from the Hebrew named "elders". Even if some prototypes of these names may exist in Judea, they are taken from Greek names, i.e. from the places they were designed in the Greek language. Precedents and precursors may have existed in Judea, but the passion story comes not from there. The times of its alleged occurrence were very unsettled in Judea, so why did Peter, a Galilean fisherman stay in Judea to meet St. Paul there? To "convert" the Jerusalemites? Why did he not return home to make a living? No trace remained of such a community in Jerusalem. Neither under Vespasian nor under Hadrian. Those Christians who were there later on were converted from the outside, from the Hellenistic lands or places.

The story of the birth of the Messiah is fictional. It is located in Bethlehem, because king David was born there, and the Messiah was a Davidide too. But this is clearly contradicted by his epiphany as God's son. As for his death the fictional elements also abound. Crucifixion was abhorrent to Jews as impious. "This is not done in Israel", it was said when the crucifixion of 800 enemies by Alexander Jannaeus became known. The whole story of the trial of Jesus and his execution is not credible. It is full of psychological and factual improbabilities. How could they as Jews voice a demand of crucifixion as asserted by Mark 15, Matth. 27 and Luke 23? This could have been shouted by a Roman, a Hellenistic, but not by a Jewish mob. If the culprit was a blasphemer, then they should have punished him all the more, not extradite him to another blasphemer, the impious heathen; the whole "trial" is a so-called frame-up, and the highest judicial and religious authorities concur in staging it, the archpriest, the synhedrion, and, lastly, even the Roman governor has to intervene to condemn to death an unknown provincial preacher from Galilee. This would be a case of "Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus". It was not necessary at that time to mobilize the élite of power to kill a poor preacher. This whole apparatus is assembled to make him appear very important.

Just as improbable is St. John, 19,13: "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself king, speaketh against Caesar." Here the Jews are pictured as Caesar's friends, although it is known

that they hated Pilatus and were not Caesar's friends. Pilatus could not entertain many illusions about that. The only reasonable implication would be that they demanded Roman intervention under the pretext that he was a rebel. But why? By saying that he was God's son? Then the Romans would have considered him obsessed by folly, not as a rebel.

These stories are rather told later on by religious fanatics incensed against the Jews; they rejected the Messianic story, the "kerygma", although as votaries of God and his Law they should have known better. The presentation of the role of Pilatus serves merely to show the Jews in a still darker light as evildoers. Yet, they never stooped so low as to accuse the Jews, that they have themselves crucified the Messiah, not the Romans. This was obviously not credible. The Romans had to be inserted in the story.

If the place of origin of the Messiah is *Nazareth*, this place is etymologically similar to his personal holiness as a *Nazarite*, and both these words are similar to the Lake *Genezareth* where the fishermen of the gospels are *fishing*, but the similarity exists primarily in the Hellenized names and in the Greek spelling.

Whether this lake or any lake has anything to do with the fish (IXTHYS) as a symbol of Christianity is a matter of conjecture, but it can become such a symbol only in a Greek speaking society, since in no other is the fish called *ixthys*, and in no other language is this an acronym of the IESUS XRISTOS THEOU HYIOS SOTER, Xristos. In the latter the first name (Iesus) is a Hellenized Yeshua and means really the same as the last Greek designation Soter. The second designation (Xristos) means the Anointed One, a new property, which is also a designation. There is no proper name here. The place of birth and that of origin are dubious, so that we know nothing personal about him. Apart from these symbolic names or designations no others appear. The word Messiah is never mentioned. But Xristos resembles other *Xr-words*, such as *Xrestos* (the good one), *Xrysos* (the golden one). Xristos was not a familiar designation. But its characteristic first letter *X* was probably the origin of the story that he was crucified, since this letter has the form of a cross. The first letter of the name suggested and generated the fact (of crucifixion).

The destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was probably the most important event in the history of Christianity and of the New Testament. It changed forever the course of events. It must have estranged definitively Jews from non-Jews, and vice versa, in the community of the "saints" (*hoi hagioi*). What now followed for the Jews was not the Messianic age, the age of bliss and peace, but an age of persecution and misfortune, and the existential interpretation of the redemption from death to eternal life, which never played such a decisive role with them, as with the Gentiles, lost all seductive force. But the same event could be appreciated by the Gentile sectarians as a punishment of the Jews for the killing of the Messiah and repudia-

tion of his doctrine, which was a great sin. The increased hostility to the Jews is to be seen in St. Luke's gospel and in the *Acts of the Apostles*, whoever wrote, or rather compiled, them. Historically, the Jerusalem disciples of the Xristos, the "apostoloi" (the ambassadors of the Xristos), never appear. They faded away. The spread of the Messianic doctrine among the Jews of the Dispersion was not due to any particular event but to a spiritual movement, to an expectancy which was natural in terms of their faith and of their situation. They expected Him and waited for liberation—nothing more. The usurped divinity of the impious Caesars may have challenged them to expect a true divine ruler, and the enormity of the Roman power may have suggested that such an end of all Time was close by. This movement could not be due to the extremely short ministry of a Galilean preacher. The times of the rule of the gens Julia Claudia were ripe for the coming of the Messiah. And he came because they were prepared for it and expected it. But he never was seen in the Diaspora, he came to save mankind and died. He was always dead because it is by his death that he saved mankind, and also because when he disappeared—absconded or resurrected and taken to heaven—he could not be challenged any more about the authenticity of his Messianic mission, and about the efficacy of the invisible eschatological transformation of the world. One had to believe.

If, due to the lack of historical evidence, we must reject Judea as the place of origin of the Christianic sect, if we assume that no single founder started this Messianic movement, but, on the contrary, it was the movement that created the communities and their literature, a number of places may be considered even as simultaneous places of origin, Rome in the first place, but also other cities. We know from the decree of Emperor Claudius that the members of the Messianic sect were not distinguished from other members of the Jewish community. Antioch and Asia Minor come into question because they figure prominently in the story about the apostle of the Gentiles. The New Testament literature is completely silent about Alexandria, although this was probably the most ideal location for such a movement. It lay close to Judea, had a large and influential Jewish population, was Philo's hometown, the author of a symbolistic interpretation of the Old Testament (Septuagint), as was practiced by the writers of the New Testament. It was the seedbed of the Logos speculation, visible in the evangelion after St. John. Here the Xristos is identified with the eternal Logos. In the *Letter to the Hebrews* he is the indirect creator of the world, and in the *Letter to the Romans* there is a remarkable passage, probably an interpolation, which speaks about the "eternal mystery" of the Xristos "now revealed by prophetic writings". All this has an Alexandrine touch because of its philosophical implication, but also because it is in clear disaccord with the genealogy of the Xristos, his life and death. Yet Alexandria, which would be perhaps a more pertinent place to mention as a source of such interpreta-

tions than the prophetic writings, is never mentioned; maybe just because of this. But it was also a place of mass massacres of the Jews.

If one says that Christianity was the only Eastern cult that the Hellenistic world accepted, this is misleading because it was the only form of the Jewish religion that Hellenism adapted to its proper needs; it did not accept anything made by somebody else but what it elaborated itself. The Jewish elements included in it are not central but peripheral, they are a “prediction” of what seemed to Hellenism most important. The Mithra or the Isis cults were strange and alien, not Christianity. The kernel of the Jewish religion was the Law of Moses, while the kernel of the Christian cult was the abolition of this Law which was replaced by a person namely the Xristos. What was adopted from the Old Testament were alleged prophecies, not the contents of the Law, although the idea of a superior God-Father was accepted but, Jupiter was also such a God-Father. Messianism was adopted but not in the Israelitic national form, only in an existential form—as harbinger of eternal life—but this was something profoundly different. It was a metaphysical belief in immortality. Furthermore, Messianism was changed through the idea of epiphany, and the more epiphany came to the fore, the less Messianism was still in the Christian doctrine. God descended to the earth to restore eternal life to man—originally owned by Adam and lost through sin. This is a metaphysical speculation, not Judaism. This is not a promise of “Messianic times” expected by the Jews. The times got from bad to worse.

When Messianism plus epiphany developed further and assumed the form of Trinity, the Messianic element disappeared entirely or was rather extant vestigially as the expression “son”, which personified one part of the properties of Deity. In other words, the expression “son” becomes here merely a metaphor, it differs therefore *toto coelo* from the “son of God” in the Messianic story. The retention of the anthropomorphous expressions “father, son, holy breath”, have a popularizing intention. The Trinity became far from Judaism a most philosophical and Hellenizing expression of monotheism, similar to Neoplatonism, but in the latter Divinity is divided vertically, while in the Trinity it is divided horizontally. Athanasius himself, its chief promulgator, was an Alexandrine priest. That Constantine accepted it and foisted it on the Orthodox church was a political concern, as all questions of institutionalized religion are not religious but political. This is seen in the whole course of the history of the Christian faith till the present time. The disappearance of Messianism from the doctrine of Christianity and its replacement by epiphany alone in the concept of Trinity is the most important doctrinal development in the pristine faith of the saints. It was totally alien to Judaism. The question of the double nature (human and divine) of the Xristos was left standing but was resolved on the higher level of the trinitarian conception of Deity. As the appearance of monophysitism shows, these questions never came to rest, especially in the Asiatic East. It was not and could not

be satisfactorily resolved in a logical sense. But the main point remains, that in the Trinity Messianism disappears and epiphany takes over completely, as this is a metaphysical concept of Deity, entirely Hellenistic and totally alien to non-philosophical Judaism, which has no such theology. The connection with Judaism was the Messianic prophecies, and they had to locate the Messianic event in Judea and Jerusalem. The age of the first Roman Caesars in its enormity of power and sin, suggested its break, the beginning of the age of eternal bliss, quite different from the Roman reality. Such Messianic expectations were, however, not the kernel of Judaism; they were rather tangential, while this became the core of Christianity, not, however, in its original but in its existential phase. The age of the eschatological bliss was postponed to the second coming of Christ. But a Messiah-King was necessary to start the whole process of salvation running from the Roman presence, and it was started by the supreme sacrifice, the death of the Xristos. The need for "redemption" of the world may have seemed overpowering in the times of the first Caesars, and therefore the wanted redemption came in the person of the Messiah, allegedly predicted hundreds of years earlier by the prophets.

If Christianity is a conjunction of Messianism and epiphany, Messianism is here the legitimation of the epiphany, i.e. Biblical justification of a pagan belief in epiphany. Messianism as an eschatological Jewish belief would have had little attractiveness for the pagan world, if it were not accompanied by the familiar epiphany to which the mass of Palestinian Jews would have been averse. But the Jews of the Diaspora were under strong Hellenistic influence and could therefore be more inclined to accept the idea of epiphany. The drama of the Messiah had to be staged in Palestine but its authors lived elsewhere. It was outside of Judea that the "supplicium servile", the death on the cross, was inflicted on so many slaves and suggested itself as a form of expiation for the sins of the world, especially of the Romans. The idea was Roman and pagan in origin. This form of expiation would have seemed revolting to the Judeans, it might have been evolved in pagan Greek speaking lands as the form of supreme humiliation or self-humiliation of Deity, a form of divine pity for the killings of so many, an expiation for the most cruel form of death on earth. But it was a Roman death analogous to Roman sins.

The Christian Trinity may be partly an adaptation of the triad of Philon: World-Logos-God. The Logos doctrine is incorporated into the beginning of the gospel of St. John, imitating the story of the creation of the world. Paul's *Letter to the Romans* shows the main concern of the people to whom he is alleged to have spoken, their desire of deliverance from eternal death, the fear of mortality and their main wish: eternal life. These prospects interested even more the Gentiles than the Jews, whose Messianic hopes included a status for Israel which is absent from the Pauline conception. The latter

is not really identical with the Messianic general abolishment of death, it is rather a theological and historical explanation of death based on a symbolic interpretation of the story of Adam as told in the Old Testament. Adam sinned and brought death to mankind. The Messiah redeemed this sin with his blood and redressed the accounts. But he did it as son of god. Thus taking the myth of Adam as a fact, Adam lost his immortality by his sin, the Messiah redeemed it and restored to mankind eternal life lost through Adam. This theory of redemption does not mean a national, but an individual, redemption, tailored to the needs of the Greco-Roman world. It is a redemption from mortality and restoration of the original immortality lost by Adam and regained by Jesus. His death regains the eternal life and his resurrection guarantees and initiates the eternal life of the believers. The status symbols of the Messiah, “son of god” and “Davidide”, may be contradictory but they are impressive in a story-teller’s sense. The story of his life is rather the story of his death—the sacrificial redemption—with the addition of the miracles and parables authenticating his Messianic status. The humble surroundings of his birth and life and his real status form a strong contrast. The transformation of his sacrificial death into a realistic story of a trial by Jewish and Roman authorities and a betrayal by a disciple whose name is singled out as “Jew” (Judah) have the hallmarks of novelistic realism, but lack consistency, because the death led to eternal life, it was a privilege. The Messiah preached publicly and did not hide, what sense did the betrayal have? Merely as a matter of dramatization and as an accusation of the defeated Jews. The Greek designation, *Xristos*, is extremely important, it shows the mainly Hellenistic origin of Christianity, and plays a significant role in Christian symbolism. The ancient Christian *sarcophagi* carry the letter *X* along with the sign of the cross, or as the cross. Thus *X* is the cross. It is doubtful whether there would be any mention of a crucifixion without the *X* in *Xristos*; the shape of the letter generated the event. This initial seems essential for the idea of crucifixion. The *Xristos* is the one who carries the cross. This letter plays also an essential role in Christian concepts such as *charisma*, *eucharist*, *charis*. Suetonius interpreted *Xristos* as *Xrestos* (the good one). As the Messiah’s Semitic name “Jesus” means salvation, Jesus *Christos* means the same as *Xristos Soter*, so that the Messiah lacks a proper name, as I have said. His Hebrew name “Yeshua” is also phonetically similar to the name of the prophet “Yashaia” (Isaiah) and *Meschiach* for Messiah. The Greek form of the story of Jesus, the story of a god descended on earth to save humanity, is similar to other Greek stories of gods descended on earth, while the genuine Messianic story is rather one of a man who perhaps was to ascend to heaven like the prophet Elijah, and simply initiated the Messianic era brought about by God himself, not by the Messiah. In the Hellenistic version the Messiah is the god.

The Messianic movement should be seen within the context of the Roman

Empire in the epoch of its greatest power and not within the context of Judea. The monstrosity of this epoch might have been seen as the eve of the Messianic age. The Messiah was not the contrasting phenomenon to a ruler like Herodes or the high priest of Jerusalem, but he is the holiness contrasting the unholy irresistible might of the Roman Empire. The opposition to it could only be a Messiah, an Anointed One. The stress of the gospels written after the destruction of Jerusalem lies in the internal opposition of the Messiah to the Judean establishment, and vice versa, is anachronistic, but it was not the story told in the gospels that generated the Messianic movement; but it was the latter that generated the story of the gospels as an explanation of the movement. "Paul" did not know the gospels in their anti-Jewish form, but his *Letter to the Romans* shows that his primary concern was with the mentality of the Hellenistic world and not with that of the Jews. Saving the world from original sin and mortality was primarily his concern and not the conflict with the Pharisees. And the fate of the Gentiles was paramount. The literature of the New Testament is addressed to them. It is not directed to Aramaic speaking Jews of the homeland but to Greek speakers, and the Greek language is essential here, as the implications of the designations "Xristos", or the fish symbol "ichthys", show. This is also shown by the connection of the Messianic faith with the Paschal Feast which commemorates the death—and probably later on—the resurrection of the Messiah-Xristos. This connection arose as a result of the identification of the suffering Messiah with the Paschal Lamb, the weakest and most innocent creature sacrificed at the feast of the unleavened breads. The "pasXal feast"—which means in Hebrew something else—has a sound connected with the Greek word "pasXeín", which means "to suffer". The Paschal Feast, which means as a Jewish concept the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, becomes in the Christian symbolic translation the deliverance from mortality and the ascent to eternal life, following the death and resurrection of the Christ. The Paschal bread (the *matzah*), which commemorated the wandering in the desert, means now the body of the deliverer Christ—the bread of liberty turns into the bread of immortality—while the blood which the Messiah has shed for the redeeming of human sins is symbolized by the red wine, which is drunk at the eating of the unleavened bread. Thus the food and drink of liberty are transformed into the food and drink of eternal life—the ultimate freedom from death—the "pharmakon athanasias". The liberation from Egyptian bondage has become through Christ's sacrifice the liberation from death. This interpretation of the Paschal Feast appealed to the Hellenistic world.

As a result of the overwhelming power of the Rome of Augustus and Tiberius, the Jewish communities in the Diaspora sought a counterpart to Caesar and found it in the person of a Messiah—whom Hellenistic thought converted into a god descended on earth. The stories about the Messiah were loca-

ted in Jerusalem, in Judea, and Galilee, the Lake Genezareth, in Nazareth, etc. The disciples of the Messiah were fishermen of souls, therefore they were seen as realistic fishermen on the Lake Genezareth, but the Greek acronym "fish" also synthesized the essence of the faith of the Christians. But it was said *in Greek*. He himself was the sacrificial Lamb of God, but if a Caesar could provide power and wealth, the Messiah granted eternal life after death. In his weakness and humility he was more powerful than Caesar. The "iXthys" was similar to the Hebrew confession of faith—"Hear, Israel..."

This Messianic faith parallels Neoplatonism or it is rather the other way around—but it is more anthropomorphized. There is here a dialectic between the terrestrial and the divine within the human flesh. The divine is brought to earth not as a philosophical idea but as a "son of god". The Logos comes to earth as a man but is still the son of god. The dialectic between the human and the divine is here transferred into the body of the Messiah, the Logos becomes a savior of humanity through his death in virtue of his divine office. This is an epiphany story, the descent of god's son, his ministry and martyrdom and his ascent to heaven. He is killed by the Jews, the enemies of the Hellenized Orientals and the Greeks in general. His so-called life is a string of miracles—otherwise there is nothing remarkable in it—his birth, his ministry, as well as his resurrection, are miraculous, only his death is natural. Why? Logically it should be also miraculous but it is not; it is the only natural event of his life. Why? Because without it the most interesting part of this human interest story, the compassion for his death, would disappear, and the writers of the *evangelion* were more interested in literary impressiveness than in logic. Without this natural death there would be no condemnation of the killers. This death is the most important event of the whole story, not his teachings or his other life experiences. This is, in the first place, a story of a death whereby it is never said why a son of god had to die. The answer is: because he was also a man and wanted to redeem mankind and this he could accomplish only by his death. This answer raises still more questions difficult to resolve.

He has really no proper personality, only the personality of the quotations from the Old Testament "predicting" him. Even his last words are a quotation from the Psalms. (Ps. 22,2; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?) Logically he should have uttered: Hear, o Israel... etc., the confession of faith, which he is not said to have discarded.

The problem of the four gospels is not historical but literary: they are four versions of the same story, perhaps four successive stages of a different degree of elaboration. They become more elaborate and more specific, the more distant they are from the event they describe. A relation of facts should be most precise and most specific the closer it is to its event, when the memory is still fresh. Here the opposite course is adopted. The first stage is short and concise (Mark), the second historical (Matthew), the third most elabo-

rate and full (Luke), while the fourth is philosophical with a philosophical genesis of the Xristos, imitating the description of the creation of the world in *Genesis*. Compared with the three synoptic gospels, that of St. John is already commentatorial. The most important event in the history of Christianity is not the death of Christ but the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and of Jerusalem itself. This event subverted everything about the faith of this sect. It was the most fateful occurrence in its proto-history, although there is no shred of historical evidence about the preaching of this faith in Judea, or of the existence of any apostles there. The only apostle, if there ever was one, was Paul, the so-called apostle of the Gentiles. The apostle of the Jews was never active. And the apostle of the Gentiles knows in the *Letter to the Romans* about the death of Christ, but not explicitly about the person of the killers nor about the crucifixion as the cause of death. The new faith was spreading among the Diaspora Jews and their Gentile friends, but was never preached in Judea itself. The destruction of Jerusalem must have contributed very much to the spreading of the new faith among the Gentiles instead of the Pharisean Jewish faith, but the imposition of a head-tax by the emperor Vespasianus on the Jews may have contributed to an estrangement between the Jewish and Gentile members of the sect. The Jews were marked men, it was prudent to sever the bonds to them and to give Caesar what was Caesar's, and to say so. Before the destruction of Jerusalem the Messianic faith was an insignificant sect, after it its character was altered; it acquired a different, purely Hellenistic character; it became more and more a Gentile faith, and the gospels with their anti-Jewish and baffling pro-Roman character became the conspicuous documents of this sect. It is after this destruction, when the Jewish religious factions and their institutions became a mere historical remembrance, that the story of a trial of Jesus was evolved and the blame put on Pharisees, high priests, scribes, the whole inexistent Jewish establishment was condemned. These historical events led to a definitive rejection of the Messianic faith by the Jews of the Diaspora, and a Hellenization of the Messianic movement, which now became mainly a movement of the Gentile element. The latter had now every reason to purchase tolerance from Caesar and to avoid the punishment inflicted by the Roman authorities on the Jews. Now the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem became a deserved punishment for the rejection of the Messianic faith. It is remarkable how perversely the political motive of rebellion was introduced into the passion of Christ. The Jews, the most rebellious of all men, are accused of having denounced Jesus as a rebel to the Roman ruler and as arrogating a kingly status. But this is a perversion of the historical situation. Why should the Jewish mobs denounce somebody to the Roman authority? They hated this authority and Pilate was one of the most hated administrators whose removal they petitioned for. They were not likely to appeal to their oppressors for condemning a fellow Jew. The

writers of this story just vented their religious and ethnic resentment on the people of a commonwealth destroyed by the Romans and unable to defend themselves at a time when the purported passion of the Messiah was long ago forgotten and superseded by the holocaust of the Judean people and its capital Jerusalem. These Greek writings were probably completely unknown to the Jews at the time of their composition. On the other hand, Jews denouncing somebody for rebellion were most contemptible hypocrites.

The concepts taken over from Judaism were all reinterpreted according to the spiritual needs of the Greco-Roman non-Jewish world. The Messiah is reinterpreted as the Lamb of God, destined to die for the sins of the world. The unleavened bread—the bread of deliverance from Egyptian bondage—is reinterpreted as the bread of deliverance from mortality and as symbolic body of the Messiah since his body was sacrificed for the liberation of mankind from mortality, while the wine drunk at the Paschal Feast becomes the blood shed by the Messiah.

The Day of Atonement—the great fast-day—is reinterpreted as the Day of the Last Judgment after the second coming of Christ. This is the day when the ultimate responsibility of persons is determined, thus the Day of Atonement becomes generalized and absolutized, but not celebrated. These are metaphysical reinterpretations of much simpler Jewish concepts, in accordance with the mentality of the Hellenistic age so that they could have some meaning in late Hellenistic and Roman times. The reinterpretation, in a symbolic sense, is also a spiritual renewal, but it strays from its old Jewish meaning. The “pharisaic”, i.e. traditional, Jews clung to the old accepted meanings, which by the same token meant very little to the needs of the Hellenistic population.

The ethics of the New Testament have two peculiarities, they are “feminine” in the idea of non-resistance, as the ethics of the weakest. The only strength of the weak is non-resistance. But beyond that women, as was said, play an important role in the Christian subculture. But the fact that the mother of the Messiah was touched by the holy breath is in itself a glorification of womanhood. This is a Hellenistic trait unknown to the Jewish Essenes who are ascetic. St. Paul is also rather ascetic and insists on monogamy during one’s lifetime. He condemns sexual perversions, as does the Old Testament, but this has no feministic aspect; the gospels go farther, they glorify the women and pardon their failings. This is put into the mouth of the Messiah, without good reason.

The pardoning of the prostitute as the sinning woman is not Jewish, but a heritage of metropolitan Hellenistic culture. The Messianic religion of the Xristos is a Hellenistic, symbolic, more modern reinterpretation of Judaism in the Hellenistic sense, with philosophical speculation on mythical events, names, and letters, using all these means for a renewal of the faith. The sin of Adam became thereby an original sin, the Passah Feast, a feast of deliverance

from mortality; the Messiah became a Xristos and a Soter (savior). Those events and persons were treated symbolically to serve the new interpretation. The feast of deliverance from mortality suggested the transformation of the *matzah* and the wine into the body and blood of the savior. The latter had to be both a man and a god, therefore a son of god and of a woman; he had to die like a man to save mankind with his blood but to be resuscitated like a Greek god, i.e. his death was only a slumber. But this symbolic interpretation of the Old Testament altered completely its meaning, although the Christians regarded this interpretation as authentic and were indignant that the Jews viewed it otherwise, namely as a new and more sophisticated and perverted edition of the attempts to Hellenize them by the means of their own literature.

After the fall of Jerusalem when the prestige of Judaism declined and all the Jewish relics—if any—disappeared from Judea, it was possible to describe in the gospel literature the events encompassing the passion of Christ, in the form of accusation of the Jews. There was nobody to refute it. The events of the assumed passion lay more than a generation before the fall. The function of the Xristos was not the same as that of the Messiah; the Xristos had to grant the believer immortality, while the Messiah had to restore Israel to its glory and deliver all beings from war, change the sky and the earth and abolish death in the world. The savior had to die at the feast of deliverance from Egypt, i.e. in Christian terms from mortality and be also resurrected at that feast, or shortly thereafter his death and resurrection coincided. The gospels tried to explain all these ideas by means of personalizations by persons and facts, in a realistic way, by a “story” of a “trial” and an execution by means of the Roman “supplicium servile”. All the paraphernalia of that death are novelistic, the crowning of the cock, Judas’ betrayal, the Jews’ perfidy and kiss of death, Peter’s triple repudiation, the crowning with thorns, the placement on the head of the divine victim, the inscription INRI (Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews) in *three* (!) languages—all these are literary embellishments, dramatizing the events, to make them especially impressive. In the past it was attempted to construe a naturalistic biography of the Xristos; Prof. Rudolf Bultmann spoke about demythologization, which Prof. Tillich rejected. But what is needed is a dematerialization of the story of the passion which is described in materialistic terms. This facilitates human understanding, since everybody knows what a trial or what condemnation means, etc. But this was not supposed to be a tale of terrestrial events. The “soter” was not a Messianic concept. There were “soter’s” among the Selencid and among the Ptolemean kings, and Octavianus Augustus was also a “soter”. The Messianic hero introduced the end of time, but could not be called “soter”. The latter’s function was to free man from mortality and to restore to him immortality through self-sacrifice, an existential function which interested the Greco-Roman world, dominated by the fear of eternal death. Since such

an interpretation of the holy books of the Old Testament was thought to be authentic, there was no possibility of the coexistence of the parental Jewish faith as understood in Jerusalem, and this new interpretation conceived in the Diaspora, in Rome, Alexandria or Antioch. When the Romans destroyed Jerusalem they paved the way for the new reinterpretation of the whole Bible by the “saints”. Therefore we find the hostile attitude toward the Jews in the gospels and the rather indulgent attitude—the exculpation— of the Romans. But the whole new interpretation was not concerned with facts or events but texts, the old texts newly interpreted, with a new twist in the interpretation of the feast of unleavened breads as the feast of liberation from death, and with the interpretation of the name Xristos, of its initial *X* (*khi*) which suggested a cross and hence crucifixion, etc. The story of the passion was the result of this literary speculation. The Xristos appeared and vanished and, while no historical source knows about him in Jerusalem, community riots prove the existence of a Messianic movement among the Jews of Rome, opposed by a number of them. A Xristos did not walk the earth but an idea of him did. If the “passion of the Xristos” had occurred in Jerusalem and had some notoriety, Flavius Josephus would have reported it, but he did not. What his text shows is an interpolation proved literarily by the fact that the passage preceding and the one succeeding the *interpolation* belong together, and if he had written it, he would himself be a Christian, just as King Agrippa would have been a Xristian novice if he had pronounced the words attributed to him in the *Praxeis Apostolon*. No wandering preacher from Galilee was so important that even the Roman authorities were interested in his heretical activities. He proves the authenticity of his Messianic calling by his miracles; therefore they cannot be demythologized, as Prof. Rudolf Bultmann would. The miracles are just as credible as the other details of the passion story. A Christian community in Jerusalem left no trace, because there was none. The killing of the Xristos is the symbolic killing of the Passah lamb, he is the Passah lamb of mankind, but here once more a metaphor is turned literally into a fact. He is the Lamb of God who in the *Apocalypsis Ioannou* is even on a throne in heaven close to God. The Passah lamb is innocent and nevertheless killed and eaten by the Jews. They also kill the Xristos and his followers, eat the (unleavened) bread, and drink the red wine as the symbol or the incarnation of the Lord Xristos. This liberates from death and awards eternal life. He is killed just as his “predecessor” John the Baptist was killed, by a semi-Jewish king, Herodes, who cut off his head. But the Xristos was killed by the Romans who crucified their slaves, so he was crucified too, and this was a “stronger”, “severer” form of death. The words which the Xristos speaks at the Last Supper about his flesh and blood are obviously an addition of later times, when this form of eating and drinking the Xristos was an institutionalized rite of worship. Passah became the central celebration of Christianity because this was the

feast of the Lamb killed and the feast of the killed Xristos which through his death liberated mankind from death, and because the word "paschein" means in Greek "suffer" and the feast of Passah was the feast of the suffering Messiah. When it was assumed that he was resurrected, it became also the feast of his resurrection and hence of the resurrection of all followers. They were mostly Hellenistic slaves who spoke Greek and lived in the big cities of the Roman Empire, and as their violent death was by crucifixion, they imagined that the god whom they revered was also crucified as a culmination of suffering, as a form of sacrifice for mankind.

The gospel of St. John shows a syncretion of the persons of St. John the Baptist and of the Xristos. Both have a miraculous birth, although that of the Baptist was only as miraculous as that of Isaac by Sarah; the miracle here is birth in old age, while in that of Xristos it goes farther, it is a virgin birth. It seems that John the Baptist is the original Xristos, but when it was felt that he needed a predecessor (and this was in the Jewish tradition Elijah), the Baptist was made the "predecessor". Both of them are killed indirectly by their countrymen, the Baptist by the Idumean King and the Xristos by the heathen procurator. But the resentment shown under these circumstances to the Jews by the writers is ethnically of long standing; it is the aversion of Hellenized Orientals toward them shown in Alexandria, Antioch and elsewhere, by massacres. The Jews petitioned the Caesars to restrain this hostility.

The percentage of Jews in the Roman Empire was incomparably higher than in pre-World War I Europe, and they were the competitors of the Greek speaking Orientals in the Roman cities. The gospels are written by the latter for the lower strata of the urban Hellenistic population. It was after the destruction of Jerusalem that these Levantine writers could vent their resentment against the Jews, their teachers in religion and competitors in economic life, it was now that they could unleash with impunity their Hellenistic hostility against the Jews, all the more so as the latter now rejected the new dispensation of this sect, where the Hellenistic Orientals acquired in the meantime a majority. They could also connect, without opposition, the story of the killing of the Xristos with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans, and interpret it as a punishment for the repudiation and killing of the Xristos. The latter became even a deicide, and served as a prototype for the accusation of "ritual murder" raised against the Jews in the Middle Ages, which just as the Eucharist was also linked with the Passah feast, but it reversed primitively the Last Supper rites. While the unleavened bread and the red wine symbolized the flesh and the blood of the Xristos, the Jews were accused of using the blood of Christian children for the fabrication of the unleavened bread. Thus the myth of the killing of the Xristos became a pretext for the justification of the persecution of the Jews, and the Jews became the "scapegoat" for the followers of the Xristos.

This leads us to the Jewish feast where such a scapegoat played a role, namely the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). This was the second Jewish feast appropriated by the “saints” of the Xristianic persuasion. But while the Passah Feast came to signify the first coming of the Xristos, his passion and Resurrection, the Day of Atonement came to signify the second coming of the Xristos and the Last Judgment, if just as the Passah feast (Easter), the Day of Atonement, was also linked with the person of the Xristos. It originally meant a yearly atonement for the sins committed during the year by individual Jews; now it was generalized, meaning the ultimate judgment of all mankind for all the sins committed and the end of the world. Thus the annual fast and prayer for the pardoning of the sins of the Jewish community was cosmically and philosophically extended.

The harvest festivity or the celebration of the fruits of summer (*Shavuoth*) becoms Pentecost (Whitsuntide) in its Messianic form, and celebrated rather the fruits of the Holy Ghost (*pneuma hagon*) which really fathered the Xristos, so it was also connected with the latter. In all these cases, the process of symbolization, philosophical transposition unto a higher level, that of spirituality, is recognizable, and this is the philosophical Hellenistic form of pristine Jewish naturalistic simplicity. The phonetic element is also remarkable; *Passah* is connected phonetically but not semantically with the Greek “paschein” (meaning “suffering”) and becomes the main feast of the suffering Messiah. But there is also a phonetic similarity between “paschein” and “Passah” with the Latin word *passio*, also meaning “suffering”. It is therefore appropriate that the death of the Lord occurs at Passah (Easter).

But why is the Xristos given the name *Yesous* in Greek? It is the adaptation of the name Yehoshua abbreviated into *Yeshua* (in English: Joshua). The form “Yeshua” means, however, in Hebrew—albeit with some small spelling difference which does not appear in Greek transcription—also “help” or “salvation”, so that Jesus has really no proper name, since Jesus Xristos means Salvation-Messiah, a tautology not recognizable because of phonetic difference of Hebrew and Greek sounds. In addition, the name Yeshua is similar to the chief prophet of Messianism Yeshaiah, Isaiah, and even to the Hebrew spelling of anointed one “Meshiach”. There is a phonetic symbolism of names in the New Testament literature. The syllables *Ya*, *Ye*, *Yu*, *Yo*, are connected with the name of God not only in Hebrew but curiously also in Latin. We have first “Hallelu-Ya” which means “praise the Lord”, since *Ya* or *Yahve* means God. This formula is taken over in the original in all languages, just as “kyrie eleison” (Lord, have mercy) is taken over in Latin prayers from the Greek. We see the *Yo* in *Ioannes* (John) which is originally “*Iohanan*”, and even in “*Yossef*” (Joseph) which is the name of the stepfather of Jesus and of Joseph of Arimatia who honored the dead Xristos. Between *Yehoshua* (Jesus) and *Yohanan* (John the Baptist) there is a curious assonance. But there is also *Ju-piter* (father of light,

who is father of the gods) and *Ju-no* his wife, and the god of light *Janus*, and the goddess of light *Diana* or *Jana*. When the temple of Janus was closed, that of Jesus was about to open. This happened when the Gens *Julia* ruled in Rome. Jerusalem is called *Yerushalaim*, in Greek *Ierosolyma*, and the Temple is “to *hieron*”. Why the chief propagandist of the Xristos is called “Paulus”, while his original name is Shaul, is difficult to make out. It is not a Greek but a Latin name, although in Greek it is spelled Pavlos (therefore in Russian Pavel). But King Shaul preceded King David and Jesus is a so-called Davidide, a descendant of David.

The modern Yiddish talking Jews have no tradition dating back Jesus to Roman times, but they still use the name Joshua (Shiah) without knowing that this is identical with Jesus. They use sometimes for the latter (the Xristos) the name Yoyzl which is clearly derived from the word “Jesus”, i.e. its Hellenized form. In the latter the original Hebrew form is unrecognizable. The Yiddish speakers use, similarly, for the name Julius the form Yoylish. The old Hebrew designation for apostate is “apikoreth”, which is derived from “Epicurean” (Epicuros). The first pictorial representations of the Crucified Jesus appeared in the sixth century, long after the establishment of Christianity, of which the cross was a sign. But the Crucified God is perhaps similar to the god Prometheus fixed to a rock while an eagle eats his liver. The Hellenistic Crucified Slave, the Divine Slave and ruler of Heaven, was represented in the traditional form when nobody was any longer crucified in Rome. This became an idol of Christian Humanity, thus the terrestrial lowliness of the Slave was changed into a heavenly splendor. It was a reversal of the terrestrial order, an expectancy of what shall happen to the crucified slaves in Heaven as a work of remedial justice.

The meaning of the Crucifixion went farther, but to the Jews the Crucified God was a horrible picture of idolatry—and as they were ignorant both of Roman history and the New Testament—they would have been still more horrified if they were told that they had any connection, past or present, with this picture. As the whole passion story, the Crucifixion is not an historical but a symbolic event, that revolutionized ethical values. Two verses illustrate it. The last words of the Xristos, i.e. the words of Ps.22 were: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? The words of the Horatian poem are: *Non omnis moriar multaque par mei vitabit Libitinam*. The Jewish words are humble, as if they asked for pity, they are a prostration before God; the words of the Roman poet are proud, self-conscious, the immortality he desires is eternal remembrance by his countrymen, no resuscitation. These are two very different existential attitudes, and the former is symbolized by the crucifixion, as the latter is symbolized by the words of the Roman poet. This is the conflict of two world views. The ruling class and the intellectuals chose the Horatian status, but the masses of people preferred the prayer of the Xristos. The picture of the Crucified was destined to show his infinite

love of mankind, and the infinite pity of man toward him and toward man. The story of the passion is a historico-religious conception, a unitary view of human history from Adam and his sin to the Xristos who redeems it. That the rule of the gens Iulia was considered worthy to initiate the Messianic epoch is a high appreciation of it, even in its condemnation. It was the historical events, the crushing defeat by the Romans in 68–70 (and the succeeding one under Hadrian), that drove the Jews out of the sect of the “saints”, so that the latter became a totally Gentile institution. But the life values of the Gentiles were transformed and molded by the idea of crucifixion, which portrays the fate of goodness on earth. Those values were no longer Horatian, they were patience, forbearance and mutual tolerance. The Xristos is not alone on the cross. He has two companions in his passion.

The meaning may have been symbolic, letters may have been converted into facts, names into realities, but the writers of the gospels tried to make the story of the passion as realistic as possible. It is in itself the bloody story of an execution by hair-raising torture, full of particulars that make it the caricature of a court procedure. Pilate affixes an inscription of Jesus’ guilt in three languages on the cross; before that Jesus has an armed escort and the fisherman Peter carries a sword. (!) Just as the authors of the three synoptic gospels vie with each other in supplying crude particulars, the gospel of St. John proceeds in a most imaginative way in this respect, and the author does everything in his description to condemn the Jews and to exculpate Pilate and the Romans. This is by no means in accord with his historical personality. The trial of Jesus as here presented in St. John has a similarity with the trial of St. Paul, as presented in the *Acts of this Apostles*; he is also, like Jesus, smitten upon the face by the Jewish judge-investigator, only the outcome of the trial is different; here the Roman procurator is not as weak and vacillating as Pilatus and declines to deliver him to the Jews for a trial, but Paul is supposed to be a Roman citizen, a “polites”. But in both cases the heathen Roman procurators are described as more just and human than the élite of the Jews. Only the Jewish tetrarch Agrippa is portrayed in *The Acts* as almost convinced by the sermon of Paul. Being conversant with Jewish law, he must have known that Paul interpreted it well, while the Roman procurator—a realist—calls him demented.

We may draw several conclusions: The story of the Jesus trial, full of fantastic details, is not credible. The assertion of the gospels, that it took place in Jerusalem, is not credible, because 15 years after it there were so many followers of the Xristos in Rome, that Claudius had to expel the Jews to quell these riots. Therefore, it is more probable that the Messianic trend arose in Rome itself and/or elsewhere in the Jewish Diaspora. The assertion of his Messianic status could arise only after his death, because, according to Hellenistic, non-Jewish ideas, it was by his voluntary blood sacrifice that he saved or redeemed mankind. That such a redemption was to occur under

the rule of Tiberius is an anachronism, a Hellenistic prejudice. Saving by a blood sacrifice similar to the sacrifices of animals in the Temple is a primitive concept of salvation and redemption. The Son of God in the Psalms is merely a rhetorical figure, not a fact, but this metaphor could become a fact in Hellenistic ideas. If a blood sacrifice was the method used by God to show his love of mankind, he used a primitive method. Since a sacrifice must be voluntary to be valid, the history of seizure, trial and condemnation of the Xristos does not fit this idea. Whether a "salvation" was accomplished can only be known at the end of time, but not earlier. The Jewish Messianic salvation was tribal, collective, cosmic, the Christian idea was metaphysical and meant the acquisition of eternal life, merely through the belief in the Xristos. This reward for a belief goes too far. The Jewish form of Messianism had little attractiveness for the Hellenistic world, so it had to be restructured. The Christian redemption from sin issued in eternal life and it was achieved by the death of the Xristos; therefore, Paul says that the Christians are not baptized on the life but on the *death* of Christ. This death supplanted, therefore, the Jewish tribal customs (circumcision, etc.), since the Christians acquired immortality through the death of the Xristos (and his resurrection) anyway.

The gospel attacks against the Pharisees may have various grounds, the rejection of the Jewish establishment as expressed also by similar pietistic sects such as that of Qumran, rejection of the new dispensation by the Pharisaic bulk of the Jews as not genuine, competition with the Jewish Pharisees in proselytizing among Gentiles.

The gospel writings mark a basic shift from anti-paganism to anti-Judaism, prompted by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It is a deviation of the tendencies personalized in "Paulus" to those in Luke, and also from a form of sacrificial death to the crucifixion. The Jews did not punish heresy in such ways. It was a shift from a mystic self-immolation to a trial, a condemnation in a court of law, a judicial murder, even a deicide, to a material occurrence in Jewish and Roman history. But after all it was also a death that led to the salvation of mankind and the eternal life of all Christians. The believers reenacted his death by eating the unleavened bread and drinking the red wine, his body and his blood, and achieving thereby what he did, eternal life.

This was not a religion of pessimism similar to Indian religion, as Schopenhauer thought. On the contrary, it was a religion that desired, not like Buddhism eternal death, but its opposite, eternal life. The ancients feared and expected eternal death, but this was reversed by the faith in the Xristos; he gave eternal life. The sect of the saints may have seen the approaching end of time, but it did not want it. On the contrary, it took measures against it, the basic measure against the end of the world was Xristos. He gave through his sacrifice eternal life, and thus frustrated the end of the world.

As the highest ideal of the Indian religious thought is self-annihilation, it follows that its social outlook is profoundly different from the Christian. The basic consequence of the desire of self-annihilation is indifference to the life of others, while the desire for eternal life prompts an interest in the fate of one's neighbor. As against Indian religion, where the highest wisdom is the achievement of nothingness, and the achievement of personal salvation lies in the abolishment of one's conscious life without any regard to others, so that highest wisdom is highest indifference and the highest egotism; the world-view of the Hellenized Orientals was opposite. They extolled rather the peak of altruism: the sacrifice of his own life by the Xristos for the benefit of mankind, so that altruism became here a divine feature. Here self-immolation for the sake of eternal life of others stands against self-annihilation for one's own benefit, namely the cessation of metempsychosis and eternal continuation of life. Christianity was neither egoistic nor pessimistic, the desire of eternal annihilation may be both, but Christianity is none of them. The contradictions within Buddhism are plain. According to it life is evil, because it is temporary and leads to death. Physical death should therefore be conquered by spiritual death, because physical death becomes then insignificant. What is here interesting is that by the spiritual death-nirvana-physical death is overcome so that what matters is always overcoming of death, only the Christians did it by eternal life and the Buddhists by spiritual death. This nirvana is a seeming death, the death of consciousness. This is then a method of conquering death through death, genuine (physical) death through fictitious (spiritual) death. This is also a method of conquering mortality but not by ritualistic magical Christian methods-especially by belief in the Xristos-but by meditation, conquering death by making it powerless, inessential. The result of this method is individual serenity but not active charity. To conquer death seems to be the aim of all most developed religions, but what Hinduism achieves individually by thinking, Christianity achieved collectively through the sacrificial gift of the Xristos, i.e. the highest form of altruism-the offering of one's life to mankind. Buddhists offer their life to nobody, they merely annihilate it for themselves. The practical results of this difference in metaphysics is very obvious in the life and history of nations, in the pauperism of India.

The life-giving death of the Xristos, reenacted in the Eucharist, saved mankind from eternal death at the end of the world, so the application of the Xristos to the final Conflagration, still described in the *Apocalypsis Iannou*, had the beneficial effect of a drug of immortality (*pharmakon athanasias*). He was therefore a necessary antidotum to the end of the world. Therefore he was called upon to come and came when he was indispensable, at the moment when the end of the world was seen to approach. The magic of words should not be overlooked. The good tidings-the *eu-angelion*-was originally the bad message of the end of the world, but it was changed into

glad tidings by the intervention of the Xristos and was really a good message, "euangelion". Similarly, the inhospitable Black Sea, Pontos Axeinos, becomes, through the eu-phemism Eu-xeinos, the Hospitable Sea, and this may assuage the wrath of the gods. So, by the use of the word "good-eu", he may change the elements into their opposites. The letters of the alphabet are also important because they mean numbers. M means "mille" or 1000 in Latin; the X in the designation of the Xristos is also the same as in "Xilioi" which means also 1000, a high number. Such hermetic "arcana" of the Hellenistic mind should not be forgotten. The X in Xristos is important because it means a high number and not only because it signifies the cross. The "filial" status of the Psalmist means obedience to God, it is a metaphor "thou art my son", but the metaphor becomes a fact in the birth of the Xristos, and this means the insemination of the virgin (*parthenos*) by the holy breath (*pneuma hagion*). This is pagan Hellenistic, not Jewish. And it is also the insemination through the mouth, not the privy parts.

Christianity is not a pessimistic religion, and it should not be opposed (as did Schopenhauer) to "optimistic" Judaism and compared with pessimistic Hindu religion. The Xristos preached no new religion, his importance lies rather in his deeds not in his teachings, the latter express Jewish truths in a more radical form; only his position on womanhood is different from the Jewish one, and this is put into his mouth by the Hellenistic author. The same is true of the Eucharist, where Jesus stresses the importance of a rite introduced later by his sect. To give one's life for the benefit of all mankind as did the Xristos is not pessimistic, on the contrary, but to follow the Indian wise men and meditate on the cessation of metempsychosis—a highly artificial problem—while people starve in the streets, that is pessimistic and egotistic. The shift from the anti-paganistic attitude of the early Christians (St. Paul in the *Letter to the Romans*) to the anti-Jewish stand of the gospel writers is very marked, and the reason for the change lies in the consequences of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple. Then the gospel writers put into the mouth of the Xristos the prudential warnings to give Caesar what was Caesar's, to avoid the terrible punishment that the rebellious Jews took from the Romans. Also, there is the accent in the gospels that the writers are not Jews; the Jews are "they", not "we" any more. The separation from the Jews becomes expressed. Therefore the war of 68–70 is the cataclysmic war in the history of the sect. After the war the Jewish proselytizing must have ceased entirely in the Hellenistic world; the proselytizing was done henceforth by the followers of the Xristos alone, and the influence of the Jewish followers of the Xristos was repressed. The free development of this sect as a separate institutional group with more and more separate rites and customs proceeded. And strangely enough, this was the merit of the Roman state and its crushing of the Jews. But they, of course, could neither know nor appreciate it. It became a religion of

the people of the Roman Empire and molded by them. It was not a strange cult.

But there must have been reasons why the end of the world and the counter-measure of the coming of the Messiah was put into the times of the beginning of the Roman absolutism. It was a time of its outward peak of power and a period of very precarious existence of the tiny Jewish theocratic state. The enormity of the Roman corruption may also have been one of the reasons why the end of this world was expected, and there was certainly a great uneasiness among the Romans themselves, but the Messianic documents were not addressed to ethnic Romans, the *Letter to the Romans* was addressed to the Greek speaking slaves of Rome, even those living in the house of Caesar. They were told that the Xristos gave his life for them and their eternal life, and that this sacrifice, was the highest religious and ethical value.

The gospels are no biographies, but tales like "Judith", and no part of them is more reliable than the reports of miracles. No relic proves the existence of a Xristos in Judea, but it was certainly a time of deep political turmoil. For whom and by whom the gospel literature is written is indicated by its language. It was certainly not written by and for Jews in Judea. The authors always write about the Jews in the third person, "the Jews," indicating that they are none. The gospel story is, despite the Old Testament trappings, a Hellenistic story with traits of a popular Hellenistic biology (Epiphanes, son of god, virgin birth) with Roman elements (crucifixion, etc.). The whole story did not conquer the world because it was so unusual, as Helmut von Glasenapp thinks. It conquered the Hellenistic world because it was Hellenistic, and it did conform to the spirit of the Hellenistic world, to its spiritual needs. The theory of "Paul", to the effect that belief in Christ could confer eternal life on the believers, is Hellenistic anthropology. The gospels formulate no new ethics. They only radicalize its expression, there are no "Logia" of Jesus which could be stated as authentic. These ethics express the opposition to the rich and charitable sentiment for the fallen woman that conform to the opinions of poorer people in the Hellenistic world who may have seen how difficult a life a woman may have had in poverty. It was the situation of the poorer classes in the big cities of the Roman Empire.

The Passah lamb symbolizes the Xristos, because it is innocence incarnate, and yet it must die, so the Messiah is likened to it as he also must die innocently. The Easter feast is copied from Passah, but its meanings and the details of the worship are different. The stress is purely metaphysical, not national. The Xristos of the gospels has no personal traits, he does not want to create a new religion or new forms of worship, since being a Messiah he has a function within the Jewish religion; but words are put by his followers into his mouth which constitute new forms of religion (the Eucharist). Christianity is Judaism for export, just as according to an historian of religion, Buddhism was the export form of Indian religion. It came into its own

when the Romans pulled down the Temple of Jerusalem. The Jesus story swayed the ancient world, not because of its unusual characteristics, as von Glasenapp thinks, but, on the contrary, because, despite its Hebrew exotic trappings, it conformed to Hellenistic character with its epiphany and other Hellenistic concepts, such as identification of man and god, purification of the sinners through the blood sacrifice of a god or semi-god, his miraculous resurrection, his death on the cross, so familiar in the Roman world. These beliefs were successively continued in various phases through the centuries in the lands of Greco-Roman culture, but not elsewhere. Jesus is nothing without his miracles since they authenticate him as *Xristos*, and his resurrection introduces that of his followers. No gospel writer witnessed his miracles or the rest of his life, and none could recognize him as *Xristos* before he shed his blood for mankind. The idea of a Messiah was Jewish, but the choice of the time of his arrival was Hellenistic, just as the elaboration of the whole tale. He arrived at a time when those who believed that the end of the world was close by, and this was the case during the rule of the first Roman Caesars; the peak of Roman power and corruption may have suggested the end of the world.

That the *Xristos* was the son of the *pneuma hagion*, the holy breath, is a materialistic concept of "pneuma" as spirit or breath. Everybody is composed of these two substances: the body and the *pneuma* (spirit), but only the *Xristos* was born of that divine substance alone, while other mortals come from the privy parts. This is a curiously materialistic concept of the spirit and a high opinion of sexuality which is lodged in the Divine.

Despite such highly anthropomorphous traits this faith is socially superior to Buddhism. It is true that Christianity did not transform the morality of the state. Collective and warlike cruelty remained unchanged despite the validity of Christianity. The ascetic religious ethics of the sect of the saints was lost when the faith embraced the whole population. It could abolish—if it did—crucifixion as a form of punishment but not slavery as such.

The servile non-resistance to violence and evil, of extreme humility, is Hellenistic rather than Jewish, while the Jews practiced servility only toward the Deity. The ideas of social humility toward men could arise in the servile *milieu* of Rome and the Orient; this did not create a new morality because the ruling élite never accepted nor practiced it. But this social humility may be also an aspect of love.

It was the "supplicium servile" of the *Xristos* and the image of Christ on the cross in painting that made out of Christian faith a highly anthropomorphous but also very particular religion. It was a picture of endless suffering, an image of supreme charity of the Crucified and may have prompted feelings of revenge against the perpetrators of such horrors. But this was not the original symbol of Christianity, since it arose in the sixth century when this form of punishment did not exist in the Roman Empire. Why this

happened, then, is another problem, but here the painting changed the character of the faith.

Buddhism has none of such social connotations. It is in fact metaphysically asocial, since it aims, at least overtly, at eternal death. In this case there exists no interest in the living of others. Indifference generates no activity, while self-immolation (of the *Xristos*), for the benefit of others, is the culmination of altruistic activity. The aim of Christianity is eternal life and that of Buddhism eternal death; the Buddhist saint destroys his existence in an effort at abolishing it forever, while the "saints" are brothers and sisters intent on mutual aid, to achieve holiness and redeem themselves for all eternity. And they are supposed to imitate Christ's sacrifice for this eternal life. Nirvana is not the climate of the Christian religion. Its followers know the truth revealed by God himself; the Hindus have a nihilistic theory of knowledge.

Christian theology was not a work of a single person, like Islam, but a collective achievement, because its founder is mythical. The true founders lived far away from its asserted land of origin. It was basically Hellenistic until 1000 A.D. in Byzantine shape, but even then it passed through the holocaust of the iconoclastic revolution. It was a Hellenistic enclave in Rome, Venice, and Ravenna. It was a translated Greek faith in Rome. When it became native in Western Europe, these warlike people drew out of it an appeal to Crusades and used this for plundering and destroying the greatest Christian metropolis, Constantinople. But it produced then Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, and the French and German mystics, but already in the 14-16 centuries it was challenged by the so-called Renaissance in the South and by Protestantism in the North. The regions south of the Alps "returned" to the pagan Hellenistic wisdom, those north of the Alps "returned" to the ancient Christian Hellenistic writings. It was therefore in both cases a return to antiquity, to *pagan* antiquity in the South and to *Christian* antiquity in the North. These challenges of the Church may have been an episode, but they led to the more profound challenge of the Christian ideology by the Enlightenment. Christianity was a common name for many phases of European spirituality. The challenges of the Renaissance and of Protestantism were not so important for what they affirmed, but by the fact of the challenge alone, which led then far beyond them. The more recent phase of Christianity saw a transformation of the philosophical Hellenistic Trinity into a biological trinity, featuring the Holy Family, Joseph, Mary and the Child. This meant a shift from Easter with its motto: "Christ is risen" to the Nativity and the worship of the Christ-child and his Mother. (Compare Raphael.)

This mother worship made of her almost a neo-pagan female deity, a queen of heaven, similar to Artemis, still mentioned in the *Apocalypse* of Ioannes. Much of this worship was contributed by art, by such prayers as "Ave Maria", and it was not confined to the West because the "icon" of the

Mother of God was the most popular icon in the Slavic countries, and the Catholic Poles use as their most sacred effigy of the Mother of God just such an icon. In the West since the Renaissance this was rather a calculated sacredness.

No feminism of this kind is known to the author of the *Letter to the Romans* or the *Letters to the Corinthians*. In 1 Cor. 7, the writer is rather opposed to any sexual intercourse, which is not Jewish but rather a Hellenistic idea of purity (such is demanded of the Vestals, etc.), but perhaps also because he expects the end of the world, so he does not want to burden himself with sexual troubles. However, he seems not only to see the end of the world coming, but he desires it, since the total abolishment of sexual intercourse would mean the end of mankind. He seems to attribute to the eternal life in the beyond a much greater importance than to the temporary life in flesh.

St. Paul maintains in the speeches bearing his name that he was a Pharisee, but the documents from Qumran, as well as the known principles of the Essene community, seem to show that the sect of the saints was rather an excrescence of an ascetic Jewish sect; this is evident from their common principles. The only difference was that the saints, while expecting the end of the world, also thought that as "prophesied" the Messiah also had come. Since they were religious exaltados anyway, the addition of the realization of the Messianic promise was not very distant to them. But there are, as usual, baffling contradictions. One of the followers of the Xristos is a "Zelotes"—this means a nationalist and religious fanatic and an enemy of Rome. Is such a man likely to join the Christian sect? Or did the gospel writers not know what a "Zelotes" was? This was certainly not a candidate for the ethics of the "Lamb of God", the Xristos. But the latter is also the "good shepherd" and "the fish (*iXthys*), which is formed out of the initials of his designation (*I*esus, *X*ristos, *t*heou, [*h*]yios, *s*oter). If this was the case, the religion of the fish had its origin in a Greek speaking environment because only in this language do the initials constitute the name of the fish. And it is because of this symbol of the fish that his disciples are "fishermen", not because they fish in the Lake Geneareth. The Lake may be born of the word (fish). And even if they are fishermen of souls (apostles), they may still be the products of the symbol of the fish.

The medieval Christianity of the builders of cathedrals and of the opponents of their splendid decorations seemed to be votaries of a faith featuring a redoubtable Crucified God. Christianity became a native Western European acquisition of the warlike tribes of new Europe, very distant from the faith of the Hellenized Orientals, their idea of epiphany and its outgrowth Trinity. The philosophy of these ancients was alien to them. The gospels attribute the death on the cross to a Jewish prophet. No Jewish prophet ever died this kind of death. It is the death of a Roman slave and imagined by Romanized

people. This shows the Hellenistic mentality of the authors who award the “supplicium servile”, the torture death of a slave, to a semi-god, and turn the “supplicium servile” into the highest honor, the death of a god. The Passah Lamb is killed, it does not commit suicide. Thus the Xristos, the Passah Lamb of humanity, had also to be killed if he had to shed his blood to redeem humanity, but the kind of his death had to remain an eternal mystery like the death of Moyzes or other holy men. But to die “for the people of Israel” does not mean to be killed by the people of Israel. (The self-immolation of the Xristos on the cross is destined to redeem mankind from eternal death and to give it eternal life which is the peak of altruism—glorified by mankind. (Nirvana is self-destruction, obliviousness to all other beings, the culmination of egotism. Buddhism aims at eternal death, Christianity at eternal life.) The authors of the new symbolic faith are masters in the work of symbolic transformation and reinterpretation: just as Passah becomes a feast of victory over mortality and liberation from eternal death, the Passah Lamb of humanity is eaten in the Eucharist in the form of bread and wine, like the real lamb was eaten at the Passah dinner. The Xristian Lamb of God, the Xristos, does not redeem himself, as does the Buddhist saint, he redeems with his innocent blood, the blood of the lamb, the others, the sinners of the world.

The original message (*kerygma*) of the saints was anti-pagan and was preached to the Greek speaking people of the Roman world, not to the Romans but to the Romaeans, the Greek speaking “metoikoi” or cohabitants of the Romans, as an Athenian would have said. But the Roman aristocracy also spoke Greek. If the sect became strictly anti-Jewish, it was due to political events (the Jewish rebellion in 68 A.D.). The original ascetic Jewish critique of the Jerusalem establishment, which the Essenians certainly practiced, was transformed into an ethnic hostility when the Hellenized Orientals or Greeks—the traditional ethnic enemies of the Jews—now proselytes—became the majority of the sect and the Jewish element was repressed. Such a Jewish opposition appears clearly in the *Letters to the Corinthians*, and it may be due to the fact that the Jewish members or leaders of the sect did not want to separate it entirely from established Judaism. The shift from anti-paganism and from being opposed to the Jewish establishment to ethnic anti-Judaism was, insofar as possible, suppressed in their literature, because anti-Judaism became the official doctrine of the Church.

The history of Christianity encompasses hundreds and even thousands of years, and during that time the mentality of those called Christians changed profoundly. The ascetic submissive patient Hellenized Orientals living under the yoke of the pagan Romans do not resemble the dominating warlike Christians of the crusades who went out to right an historical wrong.

As an historical report the story of the passion of Christ is most improbable. The Xristos is no historical personality but a literary one. His story is

a literary answer to the question what he should have looked like if he existed. The answer is the idea those Hellenistic Oriental writers had of him, what they considered as the highest ideal of humanity. This answer is historically interesting because it shows us the mentality of the populace in Rome or Alexandria, at that time influenced by the reading of the Septuagint, in small ascetic groups distant from the intellectual élite of the Augustean, Tiberian, Claudian or Neronian age, of a generation succeeding that of the "golden age" of Roman literature. But this sect which represented a subculture in Rome, Alexandria and other Hellenistic cities, with the predominance of a Greek speaking Oriental population, was not created by the documents of the New Testament; they were composed within it by many hands and are attributed to a number of saints. But this means little, because all members of the sect were "saints". And because the Xristos was a literary personality, the answer was given in three or even four versions; many wanted to prove that they and only they knew the answer. It was a curious tale of a tragedy and at the same time of glad tidings, which was repeated in the dwellings of the members of the sect, especially at specially arranged love-meals. But nobody has ever reported to have seen or spoken to him. St. Paul saw him in a vision and therefore became an apostle of him. The story of his last days was magnified out of all proportion by those writers. If they had occurred and caused such a commotion, and were so famous as those writers assert, reports from other sources would not be lacking. This was a highly educated age. The deeds of this Xristos were so famous, according to the gospels, that the highest ecclesiastical and state authorities in Jerusalem were afraid of this personage, and they appealed to the highest Roman authority to get rid of him. But this appeal was certainly unnecessary, they could get rid of him without this appeal. But they were badly disappointed. This Roman, Pilatus by name, was more just than they, and he wanted not to destroy the innocent Jewish prophet, or king, or son of god. So they mobilized the mob of Jerusalem against the prophet to exercise a pressure on Pilatus. At the end they succeeded. Does this conform to the historical personality of Pilatus? He was, in fact, one of the most hated procurators in Judea. Caesar was petitioned to remove him because of his iniquities. But in the gospels he is depicted as a just man to whom the Jewish authorities appealed, at first in vain. He was that interested in the fate of the unknown preacher from Galilee. But this alleged justice of Pontius Pilatus has to serve another purpose, namely to condemn the iniquitous Jewish establishment, in contrasting it with the just Roman Pilatus. But this implies that the Jewish authorities appealed to their most hated administrative Roman official to get rid of an heretical Jew. Does this make sense? Was he so dangerous?

That the exculpation or sanctification of the Roman Pilatus and the condemnation of the Jews is the purpose of the story is the fact that the Coptic church put him among the saints, and the Greek Orthodox church

put his wife Claudia Procula (who had bad dreams about the desired condemnation of the Jewish prophet) among their saints. But the historical truth is that he was removed from office by Caesar, also that the Jews did not relent because of his alleged cooperation in the crucifixion of Jesus, and that he was expelled to Gaul by Caesar and committed suicide there. He was the least appropriate personality as a just judge, as the gospel writers construe him, and the alleged trial never took place. In Matt. 27,24–25, Pilatus even engages in a discussion with the Jewish mob (*ochlos*), which is a curious form of carrying on a trial for the highest representative of Caesar; he even most improbably adopts a Jewish custom of “washing his hands”, to state that he is innocent of the blood that he himself is going to shed, because as a judge he is responsible for his deeds. This whole dramatization is, of course, a literary means of producing an impression on the reader. The trial of Paulus in the *Acts* is portrayed in a similar way, destined to show the justice of the Roman procurator and the iniquity of the Jewish authorities. Paulus uses even the same invective against the Jewish archpriest as Christ uses in his rhetoric against the Pharisees, in calling them a “whitened sepulchre”, i.e. white on the outside and black inside. Thus the “trials” show the same technique and a similar tendency: the exculpation of the Romans and condemnation of the Jews. But this judgment of the Jews and Romans in the trials shows merely the ethnic animosity of the Hellenistic gospel writers, while the invectives against the Pharisees and the whole Jewish establishment may have also a sectarian background inherited from the Jewish sectarians of a similar background.

The prophet Zechariah plays just as important a role in the New Testament literature as St. John the Baptist, because he is said to have been killed by the Jews in the Temple; and it is a general principle that the Jews kill their prophet: they killed Zechariah, they killed St. John, and they killed Jesus. The theory is faulty in that the Baptist was killed by the Idumean king Herodes, whose Judaism was dubious, not by the Jewish authorities. It is remarkable that the father of St. John is also called Zechariah the priest. Names are very important according to the saying “nomen omen”. How important name giving is can be inferred from the story that Zechariah decided to name his miraculously born son “Yohanan”, although this name was not used in his family. This means that this name had to endow his son with some miraculous power or holiness. Now the name “Yohanan” plays, indeed, a great role in the New Testament, so the naming of John the Baptist is important. It should be stressed that it is in the book of Zechariah that the archpriest “Jehoshua” is mentioned, which prefigures the name given to the Xristos which is the same. There are other elements “pointing” to him in the book. The “King” prophesied by the prophet Zechariah rides on an ass and thus enters Jerusalem (as does the Xristos). The Mount of Olives is already mentioned here as in the new Testament. The stories of the old Testa-

ment “predict” those of the New or are simply imitated by it with slight changes. The birth of John the Baptist is a repetition of the birth of Isaac by Sarah; the birth of the Xristos as a virgin birth is predicted. The apostle Paul persecutes the saints only to be their strongest supporter later, similar to Balaam, the son of Beor, who went out to curse Israel but then blessed it. The persecution of the Xristos, of St. Paul and Stephanos in the *Acts* are similar. The Xristos is crucified, Stephanos is stoned by the Jews, and Paul escapes to Rome. In all the three cases there is a confrontation with Jewish authorities and help by the Romans in two of them. The Xristos was never seen or spoken to in the Diaspora. Why? If this question was asked, the answer was simply because he was killed by the Jews. Thus his eternal absence was explained.

The names of the New Testament always have a meaning, especially that of the Xristos. But the oldest apostle, Simon, received the name of Kephaz or Petros, to be a “Rock” on which the church shall be built, although he is not shown to have converted anybody. As Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles, Petrus was already, for symmetrical reasons, the Apostle of the Jews. His function had no great practical effect. Why this apostle played, according to tradition, such a role in Rome itself if he was an apostle of the Jews is unclear. It is not even mentioned in the *Acts*, but as according to them Paul went to Rome, Petrus may have followed him for symmetrical reasons. Why the mischievous Jews killed Stephanos without scruples but needed the intervention of the Roman procurator to kill the Xristos is not clear. The births of John the Baptist and Christ parallel each other, but the birth of Christ is not in accord with his being the eternal Logos. The Xristos is authenticated by his miracles and by the oracles of the Old Testament; Simon Petrus is ordained by the Xristos in his lifetime; Paul is also “directly” by a vision. Paul’s persecution of the saints in the Holy Land or Jerusalem is hazy, his persecution by the Jews repeats the initial phases of the passion of Christ. The theory of the birth of the Xristos by the Holy Spirit or Breath is a highly materialistic concept of the “spirit”, but reminds us of the fact that the goddess Athene was said to be born from the head of Zeus.

The long speeches attributed in the gospels to the Xristos are rhetorical discourses in the Hellenistic style, which were never spoken but reflect the status of the Christian sect at different times, therefore the frenetic accusation of the Pharisees, the statements that false prophets would come, etc., illustrating problems that could not have existed in Judea at the alleged time of the ministry of Jesus. A good example is the gospel after St. John, 10. The Xristos says allegedly (10,8), “All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers. . . I am the door (who enters by me will be saved). . . I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. . .” Since the latter remark refers to the Gentiles, it could not have been spoken in Judea. All these statements may

have literary qualities but no documentary value. They may also be imitations of the farewell speeches of Moyzes in *Deuteronomy*. It should be added that the symbolic interpretation of visions, etc., is already visible in the Old Testament. Thus the prophet Zechariah interprets the meaning of his vision and Daniel interprets dreams, etc.

Paul's alleged visits to Jerusalem are very short and without any interest in the details of the life of the Xristos himself. Obviously the *Acts* knew nothing to speak about it just as did the gospels. Therefore they produce only parables, metaphors and speeches. St. John, 10, could only be written outside of Judea when a certain hierarchy existed within the Christian community, and if the Xristos says there, "I give to them eternal life" (*zoen aionion*), such an expression could be used probably long after *The Letter to the Romans* was written, not in Jerusalem. This community formed a sort of subculture in the Roman world where the "saints" descended into the catacombs to celebrate their "mysteries", as the Athenians went for a similar celebration to Eleusis. The Christians were city people because the heathen were called *pagani* (*paysans*) which means country people, and which is a translation of the Hebrew "am haaretz" which means the same and has a connotation of "uneducated" people, i.e. ignorant of the Holy Scriptures.

The Christian communities lived a life of mutual aid but not a contemplative life in the Buddhist style, because their life was a preparation for eternal life, not for self-annihilation. Contemplative life is always a retreat from life, and such a life was also preached in pagan antiquity, and even in the Renaissance by the Neo-Platonist Marsilio Ficino, as the highest type of life. In the 19th century Schopenhauer also considered the contemplative life as metaphysically superior to any other type of life, but he already needed the aid of Prussian soldiers to be able to lead it.

The gospels describe not a living man but an ideal of holiness of the Hellenistic age; it is not a Jewish ideal but one culminating in suffering on the cross for mankind and therefore the highest ideal of human love according to Hellenistic psychology. This ideal is superhuman and therefore attributable to a son of god. The factual and psychological components of this ideal of holiness are entirely pagan and arise among the common people of Hellenistic cities allied with the Jewish idea of Messianism. The historical "precursor" of the ideal is John the Baptist, he is the "Elijah" of the Christians, and as a precursor he must have a successor who is, however, mythical. If the Xristos were only as well known as St. John the Baptist, the historians of Judea would have mentioned him.* But the myth "the Messiah has come" must have arisen among the ascetic sections of the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. The Baptist and the Xristos are probably identical; the Xristos is derivable simply from his "predecessor", as any idea of a predecessor implies that of a successor.

* This the Christians felt, and therefore they interpolated Flavius Josephus.

While this ideal of holiness seemed almost impossible of realization, it was partially achieved by John the Baptist. The Qumran Scriptures show that the Xristos had also other predecessors, that it was a trend, a movement often identified with the Essenes and existing also among the Jews of Rome. The Baptist and the Xristos had names beginning with "Jo", "Jo-or", "Je-shua" and "Jo-hanan". "Jo-seph" was the foster father of "Jo-shua", the Xristos, and his mother, Miriam, has the name of the sister of Moyzes. The birth of both John and Jesus is miraculous and the death is violent. But while according to the gospel after St. Luke the death of the Xristos was not voluntary, according to that of St. John, 10, it was. This is a contradiction within the gospels. If, however, the Jews should be laden with the guilt of killing the Xristos, his death could not be voluntary, and therefore he was attributed two natures, one human and one divine. The former rendered possible his death like a man and his resurrection like a god. The death was necessary, because without it there would be no sacrifice for mankind, and no redemption, i.e. the specifically Christian form of Messianism. While the Xristos is derivatory from John the Baptist, he is superior in love and in suffering. He is a *nassir* like John, what the gospel writers took mistakenly for Nazarene, but he died "the supplicium servile", i.e. a Roman death, therefore superior to that of John, who was only beheaded by Herodes. The death of the Xristos surpasses, therefore, that of his precursor in suffering and therefore in love. The birth of the Xristos is more miraculous than that of Johannes, because it occurs without the intervention of a male, and his death is superior in suffering, it is a Roman death by cruel torture, and humiliating since the living body is nailed down to the gallows like a piece of furniture.

The elimination of miracles, as suggested by rationalistic critics, is impossible, since nothing else can authenticate the Xristos as such during his life. Otherwise he is shown to be the Xristos merely through his death, since the New Testament conception of the Messiah differs essentially from the Jewish one. According to the latter he introduces the change of the world, but according to the Christian one he redeems mankind with his blood, i.e. he must die to achieve his mission. During his life he is "recognized" as a Xristos through the miracles. This inference is unavoidable. Therefore the continuous stress in the New Testament on the merit of "belief" if there is no evident proof. Therefore the apostle Thomas is lamed for his incredulity. The redemption through sacrificial death is a new Hellenistic concept of Messianism. Implicit is, of course, the belief that the end of the world is close by. Therefore in those last days the son of god descends on earth and redeems mankind, as in the past Noah redeemed them in taking those that had to be saved into his ark. But the Xristos redeems them in giving them eternal life after death. Therefore the belief in the Xristos is the "drug of immortality" (*pharmakon tes athanasias*.)

Since the writers of the gospels were not witnesses of the life or the sayings of the Xristos, the latter, if attributed to him, must be interpreted as their sayings, his teachings as their teachings within the classes of society from which they came. If therefore *Luke* 6,20, has a discourse praising the poor (*Makarioi hoi ptochoi* . . .), blessed be the poor because to you belongs the kingdom of God, this sermon is still in the spirit of the Old Testament; however, the expression is more dramatic and directly, personally voiced. This literary assumption facilitates the understanding of the New Testament writers. Thus, for instance, the vituperations of the Pharisees attributed to the Xristos are those of the "saints", directed against their doctrinal opponents and their rivals in the proselytizing of the Gentiles within the Hellenistic world. Because they rejected the new dispensation, they belonged, as the *Apocalypse* of St. John puts it, to the synagogue of Satan. But this was the legalistic and formalistic mainstream of Judaism.

The "saints" of the New Testament did not interpret the Septuagint text as Jews of Judea interpreted the original. They interpret the text not only symbolically but transform the figure of speech into its literal meaning. The terms "son of god", "son of man" are figures of speech in the Old Testament, but they become mystic realities in the New. If Psalm 82,6, has the expression, "I have said: you are gods. . .", "7 but ye shall die like men. . .", this does not mean that the persons thus apostrophized are really gods. This is a figure of speech, but St. John 10,36 infers from this, that, if those other persons were called gods, the Xristos has the right to call himself "son of God". This is no blasphemy as the Jews assert. But the expression "gods" is here a metaphor. The reasoning is therefore absurd. But the writer knows, of course, how "the Jews" would interpret this newfangled (Christian) *reading* of the biblical text, if the Xristos would deduce from it the right to be a son of God, etc., namely as a blasphemy. We can infer from all this that the Jewish members of the diverse societies of saints objected to the form of Hellenistic interpretation of the scriptures. They may have accepted or even founded the way of life called afterward "Christian", but they did not believe in the arrival of a Xristos. There may have been many "prophets" announcing the end of the world or the coming of the Messiah, and it may have been difficult to decide which were right and which wrong. The ascetic sects out of which the Christians were recruited probably differed only in one respect, in the belief or non-belief in the arrival of the Messiah. The Jewish members of the original sects of ascetics may have been less prone to abandon the Jewish customs, and this question may have become the main reason of conflict between the Gentile and the Jewish members of the sect. These dissensions appear in *The Acts* and in many epistles.

It is also possible that the Jewish members of the sect had more doubts about the person, or the alleged person, of the Messiah than the Gentile members less familiar with the Septuagint. The latter may have been more

inclined to believe that he came but was killed and disappeared. The fundamental doctrinal statement of the new faith, *The Letter to the Romans*, has no statement about the crucifixion, it only speaks of his sacrificial death. Something similar is true about the *Apocalypse* of John. Here the Xristos is compared with a slaughtered lamb, and he sits in Heaven near God's throne as "The Lamb". A slaughtered lamb is not crucified. In this work, chapter 11,8, it is said parenthetically about "Sodom" which means Jerusalem, "...on the street of the great city which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt where also the Lord was crucified by them." Here after "Sodom" all words are interpolated; they are added only to explain to the uninformed readers which city that was "where *also* the Lord was crucified . . . by them". This sentence is not said by the author but added by the successive editors. The above mentioned passages show not only that the author has a lamb in mind when he speaks of the Xristos but suggest the origin of the Christian faith in the Jewish Passah celebrations, allied with the idea of Messianism, and the transformation of the meaning of Passah as liberation from Egyptian slavery into liberation from mortality. The idea of the Xristos as the Lamb of God may give us the original form of the mysterious death of the Xristos, when it had not yet assumed the realistic form of crucifixion. The *Apocalypse* may have preserved the original form of the Passion.

The first three chapters of the *Apocalypse* are not visions but admonitions addressed to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, a region that was converted to Christianity to a higher degree than any other part of the Roman Empire. And it is noteworthy that it was from Asia Minor that the missionary trips of St. Paul started, so that this could be regarded as the cradle of Christianity if it were not for Rome, where there seemed to be earlier groups of saints not evangelized from Asia Minor, and Rome was the centre of the intellectual fashions of the Empire, populated by the ethnically most variegated inhabitants. They could also have the primacy in this respect. But St. Paul considered himself superior to them in the interpretation of the new doctrine; he steps forward as the teacher of the Romans, i.e. the Greek speaking inhabitants of that city; and he wants to return to them at the end of his life. And he, the apostle of the Gentiles, was probably the only real apostle, since those of Jerusalem seem to be a fruit of literary imagination. Nevertheless, there may have been a number of prophets and missionaries who roamed the Empire propagandizing the new faith, whose principles and rites were not yet definitively settled or established. The *Apocalypse* of St. John is composed of two great parts, the first three chapters with admonitions addressed to the Seven churches and then the visions of the end of Jerusalem and of Rome. The connection between the two parts is slight, only the numerical elements—numbers—play a great role also in the visions. The "seven" churches may be a reminiscence of the seven cities that contend for the honor of being the birth place of Homer, and some of these cities appear among

the seven churches, for instance, Smyrna. But there is also Ephesus, the site of the famous shrine of the goddess Artemis, the Queen of Heaven, which is prominently mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles*. This goddess may have inspired the apocalyptic pregnant Queen of Heaven (the mother of the Xristos). The *Apocalypse* also knows seven angels and seven phials of destruction, or plagues, which duplicate the ten Egyptian plagues. It knows also 24 Elders that surround the throne of God, a duplication of the number of Elders in the Jewish ascetic societies, the model of the 12 apostles. It is difficult to interpret the numbers of the *Apocalypse*. Thus Curt Stage, translator and editor of the New Testament (Reclam, Leipzig, 1890) interprets the number 666 meaning the “beast of Rome” as the Emperor Nero; i.e. the letters of his name in their numerical value would constitute this number. But his interpretation of the two prophets killed in Jerusalem and lying 3½ days in the streets, as Moses and Elijah, is certainly erroneous, because they were not contemporaries and Moses never entered Jerusalem. Perhaps they are John the Baptist and the Xristos. The female goddess of Rome is sitting on seven hills. The four beasts around the throne of God are a replica of the four mythological beings in the inner sanctum of the temple in Jerusalem.

According to this oracular work the Messianic age begins after the Last Judgment when the sinners suffer their “second death”—which is definitive—and are thrown into a lake of fire. The Xristos plays no role in this Last Judgment, sitting as a Lamb close to God who is alpha and omega, the first and the last, which does not differ much from the Old Testament definition of God, which means eternity while alpha and omega may also mean ubiquity. The new Messianic world similar to that predicted by Isaiah has neither day nor night; it is illumined by the divine light, probably that light which is supposed to dwell in God’s selected spots, for instance, the inner sanctum of the temple in Jerusalem. Since in this work only a part of the Temple is destroyed, Curt Stage assumes that it was written during the Jewish-Roman war (68–70). It certainly represents an earlier stage of the Messianic faith, just like the *Letter to the Romans*. There is no crucifixion here and the peak of evil is not Jerusalem, Sodom, but Rome whose destruction is described. It has its “beast”, it is personified as a monstrous female divinity and compared with Babylon. This marks the original opposition to paganism of the early stages of the sect of the saints, and it differs basically from the stage marked by the gospels which is pro-Roman and anti-Jewish. Here the insidious Pharisees would lure the ingenuous prophet from Galilee into making statements against Caesar, but he, in his wisdom, rebukes them. He is not against Caesar. Thus the Pharisees are put into the role of “agents provocateurs” of Caesar, which is quite unlikely for Jewish patriots, and the Xristos is made a prudential pro-Roman. The *Apocalypse* like the *Letter to the Romans* knows nothing about the Eucharist or crucifixion. In chapter 1,5, Jesus rises from the dead as the first one to do so (*prototokos ton nekron*),

which means that the author does not know the story of the resurrection of Lazarus. But it should be stressed that the first three chapters are not by the same hand as the visions in the succeeding ones. The admonitions addressed to the seven churches are similar to other admonitions of this kind in the *Letters*. The shift of the Messianic faith from anti-paganism and anti-Romanism to anti-Judaism made it truly Hellenistic, and conformed to the Hellenistic prejudices of an ethnic character. It made it indigenous in the Roman Empire, and this explains also why it prevailed over the other sects of Oriental origin like Mithraism. They were alien and referred to distant events, Christianity referred to present events within reach of everybody within the Roman empire and up to date, tailored to their specific spiritual needs—the yearning after eternal life, after their misery on earth. It was therefore a faith of the lower classes in the Hellenistic age. Eternal life after death and the image of the crucified god that died for them may have captured the fancy of these people. In the middle ages under changed conditions, St. Francis was the saint who acted out the image of the loving crucified god.

Thus while the Messianic idea was Jewish, the shift to a different conception of Messianism was a premise for the progress of the new faith. Messianism was only a *peripheral* element in Judaism, while it became the central concept of the new Hellenistic faith, with its miraculous epiphany and the astounding promise of eternal life. The Jewish element in the religion of the saints was reduced to a Sibyllinic prediction of the Messiah which had only a documentary historical value because it was fulfilled anyway; the Jewish Law, the main concern of the Pharisaic mainstream of Jewry, was replaced by the Xristos or his alleged will; it was now superfluous, the God himself who was once a Burning Bush assumed a Hellenistic Zeus-like appearance, since he had an *Epiphanes* in human form as “son” whom he had fabricated by his mere breath.

Thus Hebrew monotheism was attenuated to an Epiphany in human shape in the Hellenistic style which assumed then a Trinitarian form. But in this stage God-Father was less represented by painters than the Crucified bleeding and dying, since he was more moving. This became the true picture of deity, namely its human aspect or phase. Thus deity became once more anthropomorphous, except perhaps for philosophers and theologians. The Paulinian Xristos was still a *magus* of immortality who rewarded mere belief in him with eternal life. The Lamb of God gave its innocent blood to save mankind from eternal death, it gave the “*pharmakon tes athanadias*”. In the middle ages the deity was identified with the crucified man-god of love and compassion. Neither the Hellenistic nor the medieval form had any Jewish components. The Jews who once were the preservers of the holy books that predicted the Xristos now became mere witnesses of his killing; as descendants of the alleged killers they were the witnesses of the truth of the gospels and as such tolerated on earth, but even small numbers were sufficient

to accomplish such a purpose. Martyrdom for mankind as the highest ideal of Divinity is a Hellenistic concept born under the influence of Roman cultural habits. Epiphany, filial incarnation of deity, was Hellenistic. Resurrection could come only in the indefinite Messianic future according to the Jews, which did not come as yet.

Christianity had reformed the sexual ethics of the Hellenistic world in adopting the Jewish prohibition of homosexuality, lesbianism and other perversions—as evidenced by the *Letter to the Romans*; but in the Pauline letters which are averse to all marriage and would convert women into virgins and men into eunuchs if possible, there are stronger prescriptions for marital life than in Judaism. Monogamy is strict but while in one passage women are allowed to be prophetesses and speak in public albeit in decent clothing, elsewhere they are prohibited to do so and they are supposed to be silent in a meeting. There is no doubt that they played a much more prominent role in the sect of the Christian saints than in other Jewish ascetic sects. But the gospels show a different viewpoint. Here a very lenient attitude is adopted to women sinners which is alien to Jewish morality. These principles are put into the mouth of the Xristos so that they should be obeyed. This is probably Hellenistic metropolitan leniency toward womanhood, which is remarkable. Rome may be its source.

If the Hellenistic inspiration is clear here, nothing proves it more than the eucharist, the central rite of Christianity. The eucharist is as Greek as the word that designates it. It is a mystical and magical action where the magic of religious belief transforms every day the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of the Xristos, and thus renders possible the participation in his eternal life to the believers. The connection of the first man (Adam, the sinner) with the last man—son of God—who opens the Messianic era and erases the sin of the first man is a typically Hellenistic speculation; the aim of this speculation is also the regaining of immortality by man, so that here Adam and the Xristos are the alpha and omega of the human world. Another “Pauline” speculation is the removal of circumcision and of the dietary laws and replacing those tribal customs by the person of the Xristos, who did not demand them. So there is here, too, a theological reason for the discard, in lieu of the realistic reason that they were a nuisance for the Hellenistic proselytes. In the *Acts of the Apostles* these theological questions become the main subject matter of discussion between Paul and Peter, instead of asking personal questions about the Xristos, his mother, his disciples, etc. Such questions would require specific answers in the real world, while the solution of theoretical problems is a question of opinion and can be settled just as the writer wants. Most questions concerning matters of fact about events and persons in the New Testament writings are undecidable because of the latter’s literary character. The Xristos is a fictitious character. He has really no private name, no private birthplace, and no private family. His Messia-

nic function determined his name according to the gospel after St. Matthew 1,21, "...he shall be called Jesus because he shall save the people from their sins". This means that the propagandists of Messianism have chosen this name for him for symbolic reasons, just as the name of Yohanan (the Baptist) was "chosen". His Messianic function and alleged Davidide descentance determines the name of his birthplace, Bethlehem. Therefore the work of *Matthew* 1,1-17, contains a fictitious Davidide genealogy of the Xristos, while its real beginning starts at 1,18. It is remarkable that the last sentence of this genealogy reads: "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (1,16); in the Greek: "ho legomenos Xristos". This does not state that he was the Messiah but only that he was called so. By whom?, obviously by the members of this sect. But there are other versions of the birth of Christ. According to the gospel of St. John, he is identified with the Logos and existed eternally; and according to the *Apocalypse*, the Queen of Heaven (Apoc. 12) is pregnant and her child is taken to God in Heaven, and in the same chapter it is said (12,10), "now has come the salvation (*soteria*)... the kingdom of our God... and the power of his Xristos" (*exousia tou Xristou autou*). Thus the Queen of Heaven, a sort of Christian Artemis, appears here as the mother of the Xristos. This myth of birth is non-Jewish.

The author of the *Praxeis Apostolon* could be called the evangelist of the Gentiles. He praises the sophistication of the Athenians and the justice of the Roman procurators as against the anti-Christian fanaticism and injustice of the Judeans. Paulus finds on his trip to Athens the altar "Agnosto Theo", to the unknown God (*Acts* 17,23), as if especially prepared for the God of Paulus. But Flavius Josephus, a Jew, says that the Greeks are considered the most educated people in the world. It is possible that the conversion of the Pharisaic Jews was more difficult than that of the Gentiles, since they had already a tradition of Jewish Messianism differing from the Christian one, while to the Gentiles both of them were unknown and the Christian more palatable. Whatever the justice of the Roman legal procedure, the Jews considered the extradition of a coreligionist to Gentile justice as a sin, and this would naturally also apply to the delivery of the Xristos. The reason was that, according to their conception, God ruled the world directly and set the standards of justice and charity revealed to them. The Gentiles led a natural life without this knowledge. The Jews connected the well-being of their state with the realization of these god-given principles. If they transgressed them God punished them. The Romans had no such ideas. Even Horace never connected the rule of the world by Rome with any principles of divine justice. This rule was Rome's destiny, regardless of the behavior of the Romans. The glad tidings were not preached to the Romans, but in the first place to the Greek speakers in Rome, mostly Greeks and Orientals who could not consider the world order then obtaining as equitable. Their

longing for a change was comprehensible. The rise of Christianity cannot be understood as the appearance of a holy man whose emissaries roamed the world to spread his message, but as a Messianic movement which faced the end of the world, and found in an Anointed One the cure to the impending eternal death and who gave them eternal life. This present need could not be met by Persian or Egyptian cults. It was by a son of God who came yesterday to save the world. The way of life which these Messianic circles led may have been adopted, more or less, from Jewish ascetic sects, but the metaphysics of this faith, such as original sin, eucharist, incarnation of Deity, were Hellenistic and provided by the contemporaries. Thus the eschatological need created the movement and the Messiah by adopting "Sibylline" predictions about the coming of the Messiah. It was not the Galilean preacher that created the Messianic story, but the Messianic movement created the literary personality of the Xristos. It is thus that we can understand the multiplicity of the versions concerning his life and death. This is a literary fact not an historical event. If we want to assess Christianity, we would have to compare the writings of such an ascetic Jewish community as Qumran with the writings of the Christian community. The main metaphysical theories of the Christians were evolved and written by Hellenistic writers whether of Jewish or non-Jewish descent. These writers have completely different purposes and ideas than the Jewish ascetics in Qumran. The latter are not interested in the Gentile world but primarily in the Jewish world. The Gentile world plays perhaps even a preponderant role in the New Testament literature, even in the gospels where there is naturally less reason for it.

There is no archeological and no historical proof that there ever was a Christian community in Jerusalem in the first century A.D. It is true Paul allegedly collected money for it, but this may be a literary imitation of the Jewish tithe or Jewish collections for the poor. Why did the Jewish King Agrippa, mentioned in *The Acts*, 26,28, wait until the arrival of Paul to be instructed about the "saints" if such a community existed in Jerusalem? All the basic concepts of Christianity—epiphany, eucharist, original sin—are of Hellenistic origin; they were not excogitated in Judea or by Judeans; so what role in this intellectual process have Judeans played? In Judea the conflict with Rome was on the minds of the people at that time (34 A.D.), the Messianic hopes were rampant in the Diaspora where no fight with Rome could be contemplated, only a Messiah could change the world, especially if the end of the world was expected. Stripped to its essentials, this Hellenistic form of Messianism meant that God loved mankind so strongly that he assumed the shape of man to save it from its sins, especially the original sin of Adam which deprived mankind of its immortality; and by sacrifice of the blood of the Messiah men could regain this immortality, whereby the Messiah would be the pacemaker of the eternal life while his believers would follow in virtue of their belief. This is a highly ingenious scheme worthy of the Hellenistic

mind, although unnecessary, since the omnipotent God could render the eternal life to man whenever he wanted, in what way he wanted. But then the human interest story of the Xristos, his passion, etc., would be lost. In addition, this show of love of God for mankind is flattering to them. This redemption occurred just during the rule of the gens Julia-Claudia in Rome.

In the mentioned passage of the *Acts*, the Jewish King Agrippa says to Paulus that he was so impressed by his tale that he would himself become a Xristian (*Xristianon poiesai*), at a time when the word and concept of "Xristianos" did not exist! The dialogue with the Roman procurator is, naturally, an invention, but the New Testament introduces its personages and authenticates them by linking them with the social élite of the time. This technique might have been impressive among the lower strata of the population, and it follows the example of Hellenistic rhetoric. The supreme example of fictionality is, of course, the person of the Xristos himself, as an ideal of holiness. St. John the Baptist is a close second—literarily speaking—the Xristos surpasses him in suffering and therefore also in love, a suffering and love that conquer death itself, since he, and following him, his believers, gain eternal life. Suffering is here a mark of sanctity and divinity as against Indian concepts, where the peak of sanctity is a contemplative retirement from life to virtual death. Here it is the self-immolation for mankind. The magical value of "belief" is thereby indicated in that, merely in believing in the Xristos, man gains immortal life, as he gained it for himself and was resurrected.

The chequered past of Christianity was so long that its believers had a different range of spiritual interest within that time. Thus in antiquity the interest of the "saints" dwelt on eternal life, while in the European middle ages this was rather a matter of course, and the Crucified Christ as a symbol of divine life and compassion came more to the fore. The philosophy of St. Augustine was built on three principles: the existence of God, the immortality of the soul and the freedom of will. This was so persistent that even Kant considered the three principles as postulates of morals. In the Renaissance epoch there was a so-called "return to antiquity", in the form of return to the ancient Latin and Roman pagan writers in Italy, the genuine Renaissance. But there was also a return to antiquity in Northern Europe, it assumed the form of Protestantism which was a return to ancient Christian literature, which was also a part of the heritage of antiquity. When Marsilio Ficino constructed in the 15th century the first eclectic system of philosophy in the Renaissance, he called it "Theologia Platonica"; it was rather Neo-Platonic (see Paul Oskar Kristeller: *Die Philosophie des Marsilio Ficino*, Frankfurt am Main 1972). He still stressed the three postulates of morals like St. Augustine and like Kant.

After the incursion of the Germanic tribes, the true Center of Christianity lay in Constantinople. Western Europe lacked the intellectual maturity

for this role. It lived for hundreds of years under the rule of an ignorant and warlike aristocracy. When it grew up intellectually, the Patriarch of Constantinople was excommunicated by his Roman rival; the church was interested in institutional reform, and both the church and the aristocracy in the liberation of Palestine, the alleged cradle of the faith from the rule of the infidels. Five hundred years after the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the church was plunged in its center Constantinople into the iconoclastic dissensions, i.e. the question of sacredness of paintings. This shows the depth of spiritual degradation since such a spurious problem could not have even arisen in the first or second century A.D. Then there were the anti-church movements of the Bulgarian Bogumils, the French Albigeois, of Valdensians, of Wyclif, Hus, etc.

The New Testament can be called a hermeneutic interpretation of the Septuagint insofar it concerns the Messiah. These are true artifices of interpretation as used mainly in Alexandria. In the *Revelation of St. John* the faithful are warned against sorcerers (*pharmakoi*) and their unclean brewages (*pharmakeia*)—which proves that the author believed in them—but a Christian writer called Christianity characteristically “*pharmakon tes athanasias*”, the drug of immortality. This is what Christianity was to achieve as by magic.

The “*Revelation*” (*Apocalypse*) has the concept of a “second death”, the one which follows the Last Judgment and which is definitive for the condemned. The dead are resuscitated only to be judged and then, if condemned, thrown into a lake of fire. Those saved are inscribed into the “Book of Life”. The author speaks also of the “tree of life” and the “water of life” which the believers enjoy. Obviously he considers eternal life as the greatest good while death is the greatest evil. The ancient Romans, for instance Pliny, were rather convinced that death is the only consolation that makes life bearable, which shows the deep pessimism of the pagan world. Christian beliefs were opposed to such ideas. The saints accepted death as a door to eternal life.

In the “*Revelation*” Jesus is venerated as the Lamb and those who believe in him are inscribed in the “Book of the Lamb”. The “testimony” of Jesus, is the spirit of prophecy (*he gar martyria Iesou estin to pneuma tes prophetias*, Rev. 19,10). This means that his life and death conform to the prophecies of the Old Testament. But it is not specified what kind of death it is. There is no mention of crucifixion.

An eschatological phobia must have gripped the Hellenistic world during the reign of Tiberius. The end of the world must have been expected, and the Jews of Rome and or other cities in the Roman Empire had a counter-measure against the threatened end: the coming of the Messiah who was going to save the world. He had to cure the eschatological fears. But he must, according to the Septuagint, come in Judea, not in Rome or Alexandria. Therefore, he was said to have come there. It is by means of the Messiah or Xristos that those dangers threatening in the event of the end of the world

had to be countered and frustrated. The greatest of them was eternal death. Therefore the Xristos had to have the key to eternal life. The end of the world was, of course, a result of the impious and dissolute life of the upper classes of the Hellenistic society, and therefore they were condemned in the first place. This was the social angle of it. Rome was the new Babylon, and Jerusalem the new Sodom. The Xristos had, according to the prophecies, to live and die in Judea, so his life and death were in the West always a tale. His life was linked with King Herodes who was hated as a tyrant, and wanted to kill the Xristos, and ordered the massacre of children in Bethlehem, the birthplace of David and the presumable birth place of the Xristos. This massacre is imagined, not real. Herodes was not afraid of any Xristos. The flight to Egypt is fictional, as was the massacre. The connection of the origin of Christianity with Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, is purely literary due to an interpretation of the Old Testament texts. Its connection with Rome is real. The two main apostles—for the Jews and the Gentiles—Peter and Paul (perhaps like Castor and Pollux?) could not have been said to be born in Rome, but at least the legend let them die there; one was crucified like the Lord and the other as a Roman citizen was beheaded. The Xristos was like his foster father a carpenter because God is the great Carpenter that constructs the world; St. Paul and his father were only tent makers, but these are movable second rate dwellings. Paul calls in the *Letter to the Romans*, God, “abba”, which means father in Aramaic, but in the *Praxeis Apostolon* he addresses the Jews of Jerusalem “en Ebraidi dialekto”, in the Hebrew language. If the author did not consider Aramaic a “Hebrew language”, he perhaps did not even know what language the Jews spoke at that time. The alleged author Luke is quite aware that the vision of Paul on the way to Damascus and the resurrection of Jesus are very improbable, therefore he lets the Roman Festus say (*Praxeis*, 26, 24): thou art mad, Paul, the many studies drove thee into madness. These doubts about the resurrection of Jesus are also evident in the behavior of the apostle Thomas. The Messianic story is doubted in the New Testament itself by Jews and by non-Jews. However, in the *Praxeis* this question arouses allegedly a conflict between Pharisees and Sadducees, whereby the Pharisees take the side of Paul, because they believe in resurrection as against the Sadducees. But the author forgets that the Pharisees do not believe in resurrection now but in the Messianic times, and that they do not recognize Jesus as a Messiah. So the whole controversy is spurious and fictional.

There are very great differences within the New Testament. In the *Apokalypsis Ioannou* Jesus is not the son of God (*theou hyios*) but the Lamb on the side of the “omnipotent God” (*theos pantocrator*). He is also defined as the alpha and the omega, i.e. everything; then as “beginning and end”, “the first and the last”, this means eternity in time and corresponds to the Hebrew “ehieh asher ehieh” (I shall be that shall be), which means eternal being.

The last words of Jesus on the cross are identical in the gospels after Matthew and Mark, namely the quotation from Psalm 22,2. But this quotation is not identical with the Hebrew text: *eli, eli, lema azavtani* (my god, my god, why hast thou forsaken me?). In the Greek text instead of *azavtani* (forsaken) there is *sabachthani* (sacrificed). In the gospel after Luke, Jesus says (23,46), Father into thy hands I commend my spirit (*pneuma*). In the gospel after St. John, 19,30, he says: It is finished (*tetelestai*), and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. As none of the writers was present at this alleged event, they use words which are in the Septuagint and could be more or less appropriate. In the gospel after St. John 20, 28, the apostle Thomas, after having touched the wounds of the resurrected Jesus, apostrophizes him as God “*ho kyrios mou kai ho theos mou*” (my lord and my god), whereupon the latter answers, 20,29, “because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed, blessed are who have not seen and have believed”. This is the standard challenge of the N.T., to believe without proof, and this is comprehensible because their belief was often challenged by those who did not believe. The events of the N.T. and of its concepts and names are mainly the result of an Alexandrine interpretation of the meaning of letters, of names, or of sentences and concepts of the Old Testament, it is a secondary literature in the service of the Messianic idea. The Pauline theory of original sin, to the effect that the Messiah redeems the sin of Adam, so that the eternal life which Adam possessed and lost by his sin, is now awarded anew, to the Messiah first, and then to all believers in him, is an ingenious philosophical construction which shows an able and trained mind operating in literature (*grammata*), not in the real world. As Festus said: Thou art mad, Paul. The many studies drove thee into madness. The passion of Christ is a tragic story which reflects the tragedy of existence in ancient Rome, but it is relieved by the asserted resurrection of Christ, the hope of happier things to come. The connection of the story of Adam with the idea of a Messiah demands not only careful reading but much imagination, it is in some way a connection of the first and the last, of the beginning and end, of the alpha and omega. The quotations from the gospel after St. John show that, while Jesus is supposed to have died, according to his words, like a man having risen, he is apostrophized by Thomas as a god; my lord and my god, not as son of God; this would be a challenge to the law of contradiction, according to which nobody can be at the same time man and god; but epiphany consists in the idea that gods may assume the shape of men and appear as such. Another aspect of this idea is whether men can be converted into gods and even become omnipotent. Hellenistic thinking seems to affirm some sort of deification (“divus Augustus”), but does not assume resuscitation. But it was the latter that was craved by men, and this was awarded by the faith in the Xristos. But, of course, the believer might ask: if God wants to save mankind or render it immortal, as was originally Adam, he could do it without this play of trans-

formations, imprecisions and contradictions. But then the whole passion story has no purpose and the poetry of suffering and salvation is lost. Furthermore the appearance of god in human shape is mythological, but also poetical and this may explain its persistence. But just such inconsistencies have led to the formation of sects such as Athanasianism (orthodox catholicity), Arianism, monophysitism, and the disputes about homo-ousia and homoi-ousia, i.e. the nature of Christ.

The gospels and the *Acts of the Apostles* do not contain any biographical details about the Xristos, his birth, his descent, his life or his death, not derivable from some earlier literary sources, apart from the crucifixion which made it topical in the Roman empire, although it would have been useless and merely revolting in Judea. But the Xristos monogram on ancient sarcophagi is an intricate combination of the Greek letters X, rho (P) and geometrical figures which may or may not suggest any real events. This may be simply a monogram of a secret faith. If it was tried in the 19th century to put together a realistic biography out of alleged scraps of evidence in the gospels and elsewhere, this attempt to change literature into reality was the result of a simultaneous romantic and realistic endeavor to save the human interest aspect of the passion story. The passion story is based on some hearsay in certain interested Jewish circles in Rome and other metropolitan areas, that John the Baptist who was brutally killed by Herodes—but not for reasons of doctrine—had a mysterious successor who wanted to redeem mankind but also met death. John was merely his harbinger. There might have been as I have mentioned, an eschatological phobia that gripped some circles in Rome during the reign of Tiberius which suggested and corroborated such a story. The enormity of the crimes committed there at that time might have been a contributing factor, as well as the story of the crimes committed by Herodes the Great in his family, which exterminated the priestly and kingly family of the Hasmoneans. People may have said in Rome or Alexandria that if such things were possible there even worse things were possible in such a “Sodom”. The *Apocalypse* accuses the Great Babylon, i.e. Rome, of being “drunken with the blood of the saints and of the blood of the witnesses (martyrs) of Jesus”. The saints are the Christians, so that this probably refers to the Neronian persecution, not to any Jewish persecution. The Jews were dealt with in the mention of Sodom; the stress is on the supreme evil of Rome. This author uses such Hellenistic concepts as alpha and omega, just as the author of the gospel of John speculates on the Logos and identifies it with the Xristos. These are clear indications of the Hellenistic ambience of the N.T., as is also the concept of the “Unknown god” of the *Acts of the Apostles* describing the alleged trip of Paul to Athens.

The contrasts of appraisal of Rome and things Roman between the *Acts of the Apostles* and the “Apocalypse of John” is very marked. The author of the *Acts* has a warm appreciation of the Romans as against the Jews. As the

fate of Paul is to be decided, the great worth of Roman citizenship is stressed and also the superiority of Roman criminal law over the Jewish one. The Romans do not condemn without a hearing, without confronting the accused with his accusers. Nobody is condemned to death *in absentia*. Paul says to the crew of the boat which carries him to Rome that an angel said that neither he nor his companions have anything to fear because he has to appear *before Caesar*. Here the importance and the superior personality of the Caesar is stressed. (*Acts* 25,16, Festus says: "It is not the manner of Romans to deliver any man to die before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him."). Thus the proceedings of the Roman court are described as superior to those of the Jews. The representative of the Jewish law, the high priest Ananias, tells the people to smite Paul on the mouth (*Acts* 23,2), and Paul answers him, insulting him as a "whitened wall" (a hypocrite), which is the standard reproach to the Jewish teachers of the law by the Gospels. The pagan Romans are described as more just and more reliable than the Jews, and Paul appeals to be judged rather by Caesar and not by his fellow Jews. Before he comes to Jerusalem a friendly messenger (the prophet Agabos) warns him against entering the city, because the Jews will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles (*eis Xeiras ethnon*) which is a translation of the Hebrew expression: *beyad hagoyim*. To do such a thing to a fellow Jew is, as I have said, a monstrous wrong. It was done to the Xristos. Paul expresses in his *Letter to the Romans* that he wants to visit them, but this present voyage is not described as his usual missionary trip but as a flight to Rome before the persecutions of the Jews for an appeal to Caesar. The Jews are worse in their unrelenting persecutions than the Ephesians, who let him go freely, although they were afraid that his religious propaganda may be detrimental to their touristic interests as the seat of the temple of Artemis. The attribution of the writings of the New Testament to saints is as purely honorific as the attribution of the authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses "our teacher" in Jewish tradition. Many hands have tampered with these texts, as, for instance, the anachronistic use of the term "Xristianos" by King Agrippa proves, when neither such a concept nor such a word existed. The interpolations in Flavius Josephus prove the same thing. The technique of interpolation, addition, etc., flourished. The word "stavromenos" (the crucified) is interpolated where it is lacking, etc. Thus the names Paul, John, Luke, Peter, as authors, mean little. It is difficult to unravel the maze of assertions. There are at least four versions of the person of the Xristos which do not accord with each other and would preordain a different origin and a different kind of death or deathlessness: he is the son of God, the crucified king of Jews; he is the Passah Lamb of mankind, slaughtered; he is the good shepherd, the door to eternity who dies for his herd; he is the eternal Logos unborn. He cannot be all this simultaneously. Christianity became a

typically eschatological religion which Judaism was not, although its Messianism contained an eschatological element. But in Christianity it was connected with the Last Judgment and the second coming of Christ. The "Apocalypse" has no second coming but it has a Last Judgment whereby the Lamb (*arnion*) is sitting with God, presiding over it. Here a second death with prior resuscitation becomes necessary for the punishment of the condemned. The Last Judgment is a Messianic adaptation of the Jewish Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), just as the passion of Christ is the adaptation of the Jewish Easter (Passah) on a higher Messianic level to an elevated philosophical meaning. The killing of the Passah lamb becomes the killing of the Messiah for the redemption of mankind. Easter (Passah) is elevated to the locus of the passion and resurrection, and the Day of Atonement becomes a unique Last Judgment. This is the Hellenistic symbolic rewriting of the much simpler Jewish religious concepts, which had no meaning for the Gentiles.

Although the senior apostle, the "rock" on which the church is built, is said to be the mythological Peter, the true leading apostle seems to be, even according to the contents of the New Testament—the Letters and the Acts—Paul, who was neither a Judean nor a Galilean but from Asia Minor, the dominant region of Christianity in the third century. He is said to be ordained by a vision of the Xristos; although he was his contemporary he never saw him nor did he ask about him or the other apostles, for instance, the mythological Peter. What the latter apostle did in Jerusalem after the alleged death of the Lord is unknown, he seemingly never returned as a fisherman to Galilee. Christianity preempted for all time the eschatological idea, so no eschatological religion developed after it. If there were an occurrence in Jerusalem remotely similar to the passion story, it would have been reported by historians. This story is similar to the story of John the Baptist: miraculous birth and violent death. The Baptist baptized with water, his successor the Xristos with the holy spirit. John the Baptist is the model of the Xristos. He is a Nazorean like the Xristos. Here similarity and succession are identical. John was the killed prophet of God, although not the promised Messiah.

The New Testament writings are only a small part of the Christian tradition. Missionaries must have roamed the Roman Empire to spread the glad tidings, "the evangelion", that the Messiah had come in Judea. If he was nowhere it is because he was killed, but he rose from the dead in a miraculous "anastasis". The *Acts* mention only one such messenger, Paul, who spread the "kerygma", but there must have been others. This message announced the end of times and eternal life for the believers. This was an extraordinary announcement for the Gentiles of the Empire. The Xristos was, of course, always a legendary, mysterious personality in the West, and his absence or disappearance had to be explained. There might have been several versions of his death: the most simple one was that the Jews delivered him to the impious Romans who killed him as a rebellious leader, in the way they

killed all Jewish rebels, by crucifixion. No Roman official ever reported from Caesarea or Jerusalem such a trial or such a political execution. No emissary of the new faith came from Judea, and Rome itself was one of its oldest centers, since already in 49 A.D. there were riots in Rome concerning it, so that emperor Claudius expelled the Jews, which shows that at that time its supporters were mainly Jews. It is among them that Paul sought in the first place its supporters, not among the Gentiles that were totally ignorant of Messianism; the Jews were bound to be more receptive to the new message. Those converts, whether Jews or proselytes, thought that they were fulfilling the holy history of Israel, that they were the true Israel, the completion of its destiny, while the Jews who rejected it were heretics. But the situation changed when the Gentiles became the majority of the believers, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. The new community of "saints" abolished in the Diaspora the tribal and ceremonial prescriptions of the Law of Moses, circumcision and the dietary ordinances; they resented the quibblings of the Jewish members about the observance of the Sabbath. Their spiritual leaders adopted, however, slowly, a set of rites and metaphysical concepts that opposed Jewish belief in a God ever present and still infinitely distant from man, a God without name, not a Jahve but an Adonai. The Hellenistic introduction of such anthropomorphous elements made the faith totally unacceptable to Pharisaic Jewry. The idea of a Mediator between God and man, of a crucified king of the Jews, a shepherd that opens the doors of immortality, a Lamb of God, furthermore the idea of a God-Father that turns a virgin into a mother by his spirit and intrudes into the animalistic functions of man, was totally alien to Jewish traditions, it was not a true worship of Godhead but idolatry, which in the East turned even into idolatry, a worship of images, and into a worship of relics, i.e. a fetishism of holy objects in East and West. Thus while the abandonment of the tribal customs estranged the common man, the metaphysical changes repulsed the learned Jews. It was against these men that the whole wrath of the Christian writers now turned. The Christians sublimized the Jewish festive celebrations by making them more meaningful to non-Jews, but this was necessarily intermingled with the new metaphysical interpretations of the Messianic aspect of Deity.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple must have caused the deepest break between the Jews in general and the Gentile members of the new faith. Thus, for instance, the Eucharist is not thinkable as long as the shewbreads lay in the Temple as holy breads. They might have partly suggested the new symbolic meaning of bread as the body of Christ in connection with the Passah festivity, yet there would have been a standing contradiction between the shewbreads in the Temple and the bread of Christ. Now thinking about the reasons of the destruction of Jerusalem the Gentiles began to concentrate on the guilt of the Jews in rejecting and killing of the Xristos—in fact

the Jews of the homeland never accepted him, and the story of the killing might have been imagined—but now the ethnic anti-Jewish feelings of the Hellenistic members came to the fore. We have therefore a shift from the original anti-pagan phase, when the Jews were important within it, to the anti-Jewish phase after the destruction of Jerusalem. The *Letter to the Romans* and parts of the *Apocalypse* represent the first one, the gospels and the *Acts* the second one. In the second phase, the Jews (“Ioudaioi”) become ethnic strangers to the writers, they are spoken of in the third person. In the third phase, the saints become *Xristianoï*, which marks the definite separation from Jewry and simultaneously distance from the first phase when they were saints, a term proper to the Jewish ascetic societies. There were Christians in Rome before Paul or his namesake converted parts of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia, so Rome could not be propagandized from there; the Messianic trend might have originated within the community itself, yet it should be remembered that all writers of the New Testament, like those of the *Apocrypha* of the Old Testament, write in Greek, even if any one of them was a Roman. Neither Hebraisms nor Latinisms in the New Testament prove the descent of the writers. The Hebraisms may be due to the imitation of the Septuagint style, and Latinism to the surroundings of the writer or to Latin officialdom in a given place.

If there ever was a Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem, what happened to it before and what after 68 A.D.? If a periodization of the New Testament writings is attempted, the destruction of Jerusalem would provide the dividing line, because of the profound impact of this fact on the supporters of the new faith and on the Jews. If there was a Christian community in Jerusalem in 68 A.D., it would have the terrible experience of the siege and massacre of the population, but this event is mentioned only as a prediction of terrible things to come in the gospels by the Xristos, not by any factual experience of the believers, or a reminiscence of it. Such silence could only be explained by the fact that none were there. The cataclysm in Jerusalem is in the gospels merely a distant story, not an experience. It was said in the “Acts” that Paul “persecuted” the believers in Jerusalem. What did he do? He certainly was not in Jerusalem during the asserted passion of the Xristos and took no part in this tragedy, because he does not mention it although he was the contemporary of the Xristos and could be there. The life of Paul is just such a legend as the life of the Xristos. His persecution of the supporters of the Xristos seems to be a reminiscence of the story of Balaam, the son of Beor (Numeri., chapt. 22). No persecution of Christians between 34–68 A.D. was ever historically reported. This incomprehensible silence about the passion in Jerusalem and the alleged persecution of any such community or its existence there can only be explained by its non-existence. But if it had existed, what would be its difference from any other sect of Essenian ascetics? The *Letter to the Romans* shows the essence of

these differences, and this was supposed to have been written 25 years after the alleged passion of the Xristos, in Corinth, Greece.

To the Gentile members of the new faith the holocaust in Jerusalem was a literary event, and perhaps a just punishment according to the new pundits of the new faith, and it became also its greatest boon since the central institutions of the parent faith, on which it was allegedly modelled, were destroyed, so that its own free development could take place uninhibited. The Romans, whose habits were originally denounced by the saints, became in reality its greatest benefactors owing to the destruction of Jerusalem and the annihilation of the Jewish society in Palestine. It is only in the fourth century that Christian shrines were for the first time built in Jerusalem, when the new faith prevailed in the whole Roman Empire. But it was then foisted on its inhabitants by imperial decree. But the number of pagans must have still been very large, especially in the countryside. Even St. Augustine was still a pagan rhetor in his youth. The Jews themselves had no connection with and no comprehension of this whole development. The new faith was to them an alien theolatriy of a crucified God—when such images were painted.

The faith of the saints was said to be an interpretation of the predictions of the Old Testament. It was rather a symbolistic transformation of the Old Testament, which brought it, so to speak, up to date outside of Judea. But the God-Father of the Christian sect, when it became clearly Hellenistic, resembled Zeus more, from whose head the goddess Athena sprang, than the Hebrew Deity without name; Zeus could have a “son”, not this deity.

The saints were a sort of secret society who celebrated their love-meals; the Last Supper was also such a love-meal (*agape*) and derived in the Gospels from such a love-meal, not vice versa. During these meals stories were told about the life of the Xristos, of his passion, etc., and then about the trips of Paul. This was done just as the Jews told the stories of the exodus from Egypt during the Passah meal. These oral stories of mysterious events were then fixed in the gospels and in the *Acts*. There might have been separate tales about the stoning of Stephanos or the resurrection of Lazarus. These stories were inserted in the gospels and the Acts, when the places which they mention did not exist any more, because they were annihilated in the war 68–70 A.D. They were reminiscences of things past, of things unseen, and they were altered in the oral transmission. There may have been two such “*Legendenkreise*” (legendary cycles), one woven around the Xristos and the other around the missionary trips of the apostle Paul. The meaning of these stories may have not been in the beginning the same as in the written fixation. Thus the original meaning of the crucifixion was the reconciliation by the death of the Xristos of the Jews and Gentiles and his extended arms on the cross a symbol of the embrace of Jews and Gentiles. When the story of crucifixion was fixed, it became an accusation against the Jews. Originally,

the question of guilt may not have been the main concern as the Jewish prophet was crucified by the pagans; the guilt of his death might have been originally attributed to the Romans alone and/or to the Jewish authorities and those of the Romans. The kiss of love "the philema", which the saints exchanged at the love meals, became the treacherous kiss of Judas when he betrayed him to the infidels, the Gentiles. The saints based their belief in the Xristos on the interpretation of the text of the Septuagint, the Greek text, and their interpretation of the text was Hellenistic. They interpreted not only passages or metaphors but letters, syllables, words, the numerical value of names, and even the shape of the letters. Their *psychology* is the key to the interpretation. If the designation of the function of the Xristos began in Greek with the letter X, it followed that his death was that of crucifixion, because this is already indicated in the initial of the designation. Thus here the shape of a letter generates the story of crucifixion. But these people discussed and commented on stories told them and/or read in the text of the Septuagint. The story of crucifixion, when fixated, for instance, by Luke, became an accusation against the Jews, instead of a reconciliation of what were thought to be the two types of human beings: Jews and Gentiles. The fullest account of the two legendary cycles is preserved in the gospel *Kata Loukan* and the *Praxeis Apostolon*, allegedly by the same author.

The most active apostle is the one called Paul, coming from Tarsus, a city of Asia Minor near the Syrian border. His connection with Rome is asserted and his main letter is addressed to the inhabitants of Rome. No letter of the New Testament is addressed to the alleged community in Jerusalem. Was perhaps the gospel after St. John and/or its chapter with the Logos speculation written in Alexandria? The two main apostles, Paul of Tarsos and Peter (Kephass) in Jerusalem do not use their original Hebrew names with the sh-assonance Shimon and Shaul, and are called with Hellenistic names with a p-assonance. In the *Letter to the Romans* the kind of death of the Xristos is not mentioned at all; it was not yet crystallized around the Greek letter X when the text was written. The writers of the gospels put such rites as the Eucharist into the mouth of the Xristos as ordained by him, and they may have assumed that this was really so. The Xristos is from Nazareth, in Galilee, probably because he was like John the Baptist a Nazarite ("separated" and devoted to God, *Numeri*. 6,2:). He makes solemn declarations from Mountains (Mount of Olives) like Moyzes did. He dies on a hill which reminds one also of Moyzes; this is called *Golgatha*, and where his judge, Pilatus, was sitting is *Gabbata* and he is from *Galilee*. The legendary Petrus, the "Rock", of the church is a vacillating personality and criticized by the author of the *Acts* for lack of sincerity in following the true prescriptions of the new dispensation. The New Testament mentions clearly only two disciples of the Xristos, his heir apparent Simon-Peter and his betrayer Judas (the Jew), the only one from Judea, while the others were from Galilee. The in-

credulous Thomas appears only in an appendix to the gospel text, describing Jesus' resurrection which was lacking originally. When the Jews extradited the Xristos to the Romans (into the hands of the Gentiles), they accused him, not of heresy, which would not interest the Romans, but of rebellion, because he styled himself king of the Jews. But this was not an intelligent accusation. Wherein did this rebellion consist apart from words which would show to a Roman that he was mad? Here the authors of the gospels bank too much on the credulity of the readers. This distortion of the meaning of rebellion is supposed to show the depravity of the Jews. They distort knowingly the spiritual kingship of the Messiah as a successor of David into political rebellion. This shows the goodness of the Gentiles (Pilatus, etc.) as against the wickedness of the Jews. But this is literature written by the enemies of the Jews.

The conventicles of the groups of saints were at the same time love reunions of men and women as candidates of eternal life, which they gained by eating the bread and drinking the wine of the Xristos. This was a Hellenistic idea. Single terms of the Septuagint like "parthenos" were construed into a whole theory of virgin birth; the sin of Adam was interpreted as original sin; the Easter Lamb became symbolically the Lamb of God, its death, the death of the Messiah, supposed to be sacrificial and voluntary, became a realistic story of a trial and killing, by the realistic Hellenistic writers, perhaps prompted by ethnic resentment. The whole symbolistic interpretation was a Hellenized, Westernized form of originally simple Judaic ideas and terms. Bread and wine are transformed symbolically and magically into the true flesh and blood of the Xristos, and become the central rite of the Messianic church, replacing all the sacrifices in the destroyed Temple of Jerusalem. The judgment of sins at the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) become the ultimate Judgment at the end of the world. The theological generalization of Biblical predictions and events shows that the origin of this elaboration lay as a whole in the Hellenic West and not in Judea. While the Hellenistic theologians of Christianity abandoned the whole figural apparatus of Greek mythology, they did not reject but incorporated some basic concepts of this mythology such as epiphany, virgin birth, the mixing of gods and humans, and topped all this with the promise of eternal life after death. It is because the Christians expected resurrection in the near future that they stored their dead carefully in the catacombs. The most important internal transition within the Messianic faith was the reversal of the original anti-pagan to an anti-Jewish position, caused mainly by the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem by the Romans, their demeaning treatment of the Jews after their defeat, the imposition of a head tax, etc. The revulsion of the Jews against the last form of the Messianic faith made out of them an incomprehensible object of evil obstinacy. Once more, as in the times of Seleucid rule in Syria, they became unique religious deviationists.

While the New Testament refers only obliquely to the destruction of Jerusalem by dire predictions put into the mouth of the Xristos, there is no direct reference to it and to its influence of the Messianic faith; however, the difference in mood and position between the *Letter to the Romans* or the *Apocalypse* and the gospels is enormous. One would conclude from the gospels that the main enemy of the Christian sect were the Jews, not the Romans or the other pagans. The beliefs of the latter are never specifically attacked, only the Jewish dietary laws, circumcision, etc., are denounced. But the latter disputes are obviously due to internal dissensions between Jewish and Gentile members, while the gospels attack the Jewish establishment in Judea. Paul is called the apostle of the Gentiles but not quite justifiably. He, in fact, goes first to the Jewish synagogue to convert the Jews in the first place, because he expects here more understanding for his Messianic message, and trusts that Jewish mentality will be quicker to grasp his discourse as being more familiar with its basic terms. Paganism and the pagan way of life are attacked by Paul, while the gospels dealing with the life of the Xristos have as their main opponent the Jews, perhaps because they were the real competitors for the possession of the truth within the meaning of the gospel writers. The specific beliefs of the pagans were not taken by them seriously. Jewish disbelief in the Xristos was naturally more damaging. If they, versed in the literature of the Old Testament, rejected the new dispensation as not genuine, who could accept it? From the Jewish point of view the declaration of the Xristos, or rather of his supporters, to the effect that his realm was not from this earth was no valid explanation, since it was the traditional belief that his coming would mark the end of the world as it was until his coming. He had not to die for it, he had merely to initiate it. But this could be seen by everybody and there was no need of explanation. But a change of their mythology into some new religious form seems in fact a necessity. Could they worship indefinitely Zeus and Hera? This is not likely. They had to turn to some supernational Deity. The belief in the Triune God, etc., was certainly more sophisticated than their own cults or those of their neighbors such as the Persians and the Egyptians.

The acceptance of the theory of Christian redemption by a part of the Greco-Roman population did not change the natural course of events in the world. The spread of any creed means the loss of its "sanctity", since the majority of men is not composed of "saints". But this is what the Old Testament demands of the people of Israel. The man who established the Christian creed in the Roman Empire, Constantine I, was adopted as a saint by the Greek Orthodox, the Anatolian and Armenian churches, but he killed his wife Fausta, his son Crispus, his brother in law Licinius and the latter's son, i.e. his 11 year old nephew. His mother Helena brought Christianity to Jerusalem in building there the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, ten generations after the assumed death of the Xristos. At that time the main seat of

Christians was in Asia Minor, and it is perhaps because of this that the birth-place of the main propagandist of Christianity was put into Tarsus, a town in Asia Minor and it is from there that he started his missionary trips to the opposite coast of the Aegean Sea. But the Christian community in Rome existed before the conversion of Corinth or Galatia attributed to Paul. But wherever a Jewish community lived that was familiar with the Septuagint, a Messianic movement could arise independently; but, of course, somebody had to state that the Messiah did come. And there might have been different versions of these "glad tidings". Being the Lamb of God he might have been killed like a Lamb, or he might have been driven by Roman soldiers to his place of execution on the hill of Golgatha. As the brethren used the "holy kiss" (*philema hagion*) as a sign of greeting in love, stories were told that in a culmination of treason one disciple called significantly Judah (Jew) betrayed the holy man with the perversive kiss of love. The question of the death of the Messiah and the alleged perpetrators is beside the point, since, according to the Christian theory, the Messiah must die to save mankind by the sacrifice of his blood. The Jewish tradition of Messianism is different, since it is God himself that brings about the cosmic change and the Messiah plays no such active role as in Christianity. He must by no means spill his blood, he is no redeemer in this sense. There is no theory of sacrificial death of the prophet or the hero and of the redeeming qualities of such death. This is a pagan Hellenistic idea. According to Jewish ideas of this time, you could redeem a certain sin by sacrificing, for instance, a dove, but there is no room for the idea of the sacrifice of a man and of the "redeeming" value of his blood. The redeeming value of death of the hero was no religious idea of the Jews at that time. Yet this is the central idea of Christian Messianism. But this idea is linked with epiphany, i.e. to have such a redeeming value the blood must be that of a man who is also a god or a son of God. This makes the idea of redemption still more complex. But this was no Jewish, it was a Hellenistic, idea. It implied the intrusion of deity in human biology. This idea that one man can save or redeem the whole humanity by sacrificing himself is sublime in an aesthetic sense yet anthropomorphous. It is a concretion of the idea of religious sacrifices in the temples and the idea of the patriotic death of such heroes as Leonidas, the Horatii, etc.

As was said no special emissary from Judea was needed to spread the "glad tidings" (*evangelion*), that the Messiah or rather the Xristos has come. There might have been in Rome or elsewhere prophets who had such a vision just as Paul had one.

As the world consists within the understanding of the New Testament of two parts, of the Jews and the Gentiles (*ta ethne-hagoyim*), or more specifically of Jews and Greeks, there had to be, as I have mentioned, for reasons of symmetry, two apostles, one for the Gentiles and one for the Jews. Paul and Peter play this role. But while Paul converts Jews and Gentiles, Peter

does not seem to convert anybody. He is the titular head of the Jerusalem Christian community. Paul is described as a Pharisee from the tribe of Benjamin. But the Pharisees were merely those Jews who accepted the written and oral tradition (*thorah she be ketab* and *thorah she bal peh*), while the Sadducees accepted—as did the Samaritans—merely the written Torah or Law. Thus the attacks against the Pharisees in the New Testament are merely attacks against the Jewish establishment or the Jews in general. The New Testament, however, attributes to the Pharisees hypocrisy, wickedness, etc. Of course, the members of the Jewish establishment may or may not be tainted by such properties. The Jews of that time scarcely distinguished between members of the tribe of Benjamin from that of Judah. The tyrannical reign of the tetrarch Herodes, his cruel killing of the holy man John the Baptist, might have influenced the idea of the end of the world and the rise of the Messianic movement abroad. But a Jesus-trial, with the participation of the tetrach Herodes, the synhedrium, the archpriest, and even the Roman procurator, could have taken place in Jerusalem only if the Xristos were a famous man, which he was not. He could be known only owing to the miracles he is said to have performed. Without them he was a “prophet” like Abados in the *Acts of the Apostles* and many others, since prophesying and soothsaying seemed to be a quite common profession and the Jewish women were known in Rome as soothsayers like today the Gypsies. Thus without the miracles there cannot be any “trial” with the cooperation of the synhedrium, the high priest, the scholars and the Roman governor; all those people would scarcely notice a common prophet; and if he were uncommon, noticed by these notables, Flavius Josephus would have noticed him too. The expression “archiereis and grammateis” cannot be correct, the author did not know perhaps that there was only one “archiereus”, one high priest, not many. And they all would scarcely stand around in the praetorium with the mob and shout “crucify him”; that would not be necessary and is not the *modus procedendi* of these circles. Furthermore, what sort of legal procedure is that? If the Xristos was accused of being a blasphemer, of arrogating the functions of a Messiah, etc., the Roman governor would refuse to judge him at all, and if he had answered as he did that he is the king of Jews (“sy legeis” in the text), then Pilatus would tell him what Festus told Paulus: you are mad. If he was accused of being a rebel and inciting the people not to pay the taxes to the Caesar, the archpriest and the scholars were not the witnesses for this transgression and still less the ruler of the Jews Herodes. But those witnesses are not produced, it is the mob and the notables who are shouting. This is not a court procedure. Furthermore, it is interesting that the Jewish ruler Herodes gives Jesus a beautiful coat and is very interested to see and hear him. Why should he be so interested if not owing to the miracles which the Xristos is claiming to perform, or rather the authors of the gospels are claiming for him? The splendid coat given by Herodes is the last reminis-

cence of the “kitonet pasim”, the beautiful chiton or coat given by Jacob to Joseph which aroused such jealousy among his brothers. But elsewhere it is not the coat given by Herodes but the red coat of the soldiers that is given to him, to crown him then derisively as king of the Jews. The grounds of this accusation are by no means stated clearly. It is not clear whether he is accused for political or religious reasons. Could the Romans condemn him for Jewish religious reasons which they themselves did not observe but transgressed? A Messiah may be a “king” in a metaphoric sense but would a Roman official condemn anybody for a metaphor? The Jewish king Herodes is not represented as an enemy of the Xristos, and the Roman governors such as Pilatus, Felix, Festus, are consistently pictured as just and charitable as against the scheming Jews. Yet Pilatus condemns the Xristos merely out of weakness. But he has no reason to be weak, because he is not dependent on the Jews. Furthermore, without the “miracles” there could not be a public trial of this kind, without the notoriety of the culprit. The tetrarch Herodes killed the Baptist, but not for political reasons. He killed him because the Baptist condemned the immorality of his marriage with his sister in law during the life of his brother.

If the fish (iXthys) was the original symbol of the new sect, then the crucifixion is unlikely, because a fish cannot be crucified. And it would prove the purely Hellenistic origin of this faith, since “iXthys” is a Greek word. As without the initial X in Xristos there is no cross and no crucifixion, so with the “iXthys” as symbol of the Xristos and Xristianity there cannot be any origin of this faith outside the confines of Hellenism. Judea then enters the picture merely as the locale of a story. The divergences and inconsistencies of the gospel stories are easily explained if they are merely literary and do not picture any real event. The faith in the Xristos was based on the promise of eternal life—if you believed—and the threat of eternal death if you did not. The Xristos was the Atlas on which these beliefs stood.

The shape of the letter X in Xristos shows the origin of the cross and crucifixion of the Xristos; the abbreviation “iXthys” shows the Hellenistic origin of the faith in the Xristos. The miracles in the gospels are a necessary premise of a “trial” with participation of the notables. The procedures adopted in the “trial” show a lack of familiarity with any legal procedures—Jewish or Roman—and substitute for it mob rule and lynch justice.

There is no proof that any part of the New Testament was inspired by the Xristos; all these writings were composed at a much later date. So we would have here a founder of a religion without any doctrine to his merit. His real merit would be his death. Is there any reason to accept such a theory? Paul did not know the gospel stories and the *Letter to the Romans* shows that the story of the crucifixion was not what he knew about the Xristos. If Paul was from Tarsus and was twice in Judea after the death of Christ and also before that when he “persecuted” the so-called Christians, then he knows too little

about the life of the Xristos. Judea is not entailed in the Messianic story in a personal or territorial but only in a literary way. It is the locale of the story, and had to be such a locale according to what the texts of the Septuagint said about the Messiah.

The story of a redemption from sin and reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles by means of the cross of the Messiah may have arisen anywhere in the Hellenistic world where Jews lived among the Gentiles. The cross of the Messiah had originally another meaning. It was a tool of the coming reconciliation of the Jews and Gentiles, not a tool of their accusation by the Gentiles. The accusation and a trial could not bring them together. But the Hellenistic gospel writers changed successively the meaning of the crucifixion.

The Passion story in the gospels mentions that the Roman soldiers who conducted the Xristos to his place of execution on the Golgatha hill requisitioned on their way a Jew of Kyrene named Simeon and let him carry the cross of the Xristos. Is this story told to show the merciful character of the Roman soldiers who led him to his death? The Xristos might have perhaps carried his cross, i.e. (symbolically) his lot alone, but it was too heavy for him, so the Jew from Kyrene helped him out. But why is he from Kyrene and works the fields close to Jerusalem? It is possible that the authors understood the word "Kyrene" as a symbolic name, composed of "Kyriou eirene", meaning the "peace of the Lord"? Does Simeon carry the cross to the "peace of the Lord"? Sometimes two sons of Simeon are mentioned, Alexander and Rufus. Do they represent the Jews and the Gentiles? Whose father carries the cross of the Lord? The three names: Simeon, Alexander and Rufus comprehend the Jewish, Greek and Roman names as representative of their nations. They may all carry virtually the cross of the Lord to the place of reconciliation or Golgatha, and the death of the Lord is supposed to reconcile these components of the Hellenistic world.

The name of the place of the crucifixion, Golgatha, has curiously also a Greek translation, it is called "Kranios". Real place names have no translation, Golgatha and Kranios are meant to signify the place of skulls. St. Luke 23,33, states, "they came into the place called Kranios (*ton topon kaloumenon Kranion*). He does not even give the alleged Aramaic name Golgatha. The name would be a piece of symbolistic Hellenistic "etymology". "Kranios" could be a Hellenistic "translation" of "Mons Capitolinus" or Capitulum, which also seems to contain the word "caput" meaning "head", which resembles "skull". "Kranios topos" could well be the transcription into Greek of "mons Capitolinus". But there may be more to it. The Capitoline hill is the place of the temple of Jupiter, the father of the gods (literally: the father of light), and Jupiter is identified with his Greek counterpart Zeus *Kronion*, the son of Kronos, which has a strange resemblance of "topos Kranios". Kronos, the father of Zeus, can be easily assimilated to Xronos meaning Time, and beginning with the same letter X as Xristos. The

crucifixion would turn out to be a simple rite of reconciliation, symbolic not factual.

If the parallel Golgatha-*topos Kranios* (*mons Capitolinus*)—has any merit, this would be an additional indication that the story of crucifixion was evolved in Rome itself, which would be natural and logical since crucifixion was a native way of execution in Rome. The Messianic movement had a factual background, it coincided with the beginning of the imperial era in Rome and was connected with it. This was no accident. The originators of Christianity believed that this culmination of imperial power was also the threshold of its fall, that this was the last gasp of heathen power on earth, and that the end of the world and the Messianic era were dawning. As they were members of the Jewish community, they thought that the man who would carry through this revolution was not in Rome but in Judea, that this could only be the Messiah, but they were the saints, the last remnant of the holy people of Israel, the “hoi hagioi”, i.e. the “kedoshim”, and that this Messiah would sanctify the inhabitants of the earth by purifying them with the holy spirit, the “pneuma hagion”, i.e. with the “ruaX hakodesh”. To this Xristos, the luminous figure of a martyred Xristos, they were sworn and beholden since he was the “light of the world”. The question how such holy communities were founded in such distant places as Rome and Asia Minor is answered by the fact that the proto-Christian communities of saints probably mostly originated within the ascetic Jewish communities spread over the Empire. This could be also the Essenes described thus by the *Concise Dictionary of Ancient History* (p. 127): “Jewish sect founded in the 2nd Cent. B.C. which sought to combine the ascetic practices of the Hebrew religion with eastern tenets and rites. They believed in one God and in eternal predestination. They accepted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but denied the resurrection of the body, and held a Greek view of the future rewards and punishments. They lived austere, practiced community of goods, dividing their time between prayer, study of the sacred writings, and agriculture. They were favored by the Herods, but strongly opposed by orthodox Jews. The sect had died out before the 3rd Cent. A.D.”

But the Christians were anti-Herodian as the gospel stories prove. To the non-Jewish members of the updated Neo-Judaism of the Christians the new faith was the *billet d'entrée* into eternal life.

The central stress of the crucifixion lies in the “outstretched arms”, the symbol of all-embracing love. The Crucified outstretches his arms to embrace the whole world—the Jews and the Gentiles—and sheds at the same time his blood for them. In the Old Testament God leads Israel with “outstretched arms” (*bizroa netuyah*) from the servitude in Egypt to liberty, and the Xristos leads mankind (both Jews and Gentiles) reconciled into eternal life. Thus the “outstretched arms” on the cross are the central symbol of the crucifixion, and the two evildoers (*kakourgoi*) crucified on his two sides are

a symbol of the two components of the world, the Jews and the Gentiles. One of them will even be soon in paradise. If this original meaning of the cross of Xristos was lost and the stress led on the trial and killing of the Xristos and on the accusation of the Jews for the killing instead of their reconciliation with the Gentiles, this marks only the shift of the faith of the saints from anti-paganism to anti-Judaism, as if they were the main enemies of the faith of the saints, while the latter were factually persecuted by the Romans, i.e. the Gentiles. Of course, the Jews "repudiated" the cross of the new faith and hence also the "reconciliation".

The Pharisees or the Jewish establishment are accused of similar vices by the gospels as they are by the Jewish sectarians of Qumran; these are properties that can usually be raised against all people who are in power. They are proud, sanctimonious, corruptible, venal, etc. The Jewish populace was proud and fanatical and rebelled against the Romans, while the Hellenistic world accepted meekly the domination by the Romans. Without this extremism in religious ideas, without the conviction that they were in possession of the ultimate truth, the Jews could not have played the role in religious history which they did. And they played it with lethal exit. The gospel literature construes a causal connection between the destruction of the Jews and the repudiation of the Christ but it does so obliquely, not directly out by putting *post factum dire* predictions about the future of Jerusalem into the mouth of the Xristos. But in describing the mythical reverberations of his crucifixion in the Temple (torn curtains) and in nature (obscuration of the light), it also shows the mythical nature of the event.

The gospels never attack specific pagan beliefs or rites, being concerned exclusively with the passion story. Thus in reading them the impression must arise that the only opponents of the Xristos and of the true faith are not the pagans but the Jews. And just this is the result of the shift in position after the destruction of Jerusalem. It also shows that the authors of the gospels were Christianized Gentiles, not Christianized Jews. The main reason of this hostility was naturally the rejection of the Messianic interpretation of the community of the saints by the bulk of the Jews.

The reconciliation by the cross of the Lord, of Jews and Gentiles, meant also that the Jews and Gentiles were liberated by the Sacrifice of the Lord of the prescriptions of the Jewish law, i.e. mainly the dietary laws, the circumcision of males, and the strict observance of the Sabbath. The discard of these customs by the Jews and the assimilation of their way of life with that of the Gentiles (Greeks, Romans, etc.) would also be a sign of "reconciliation". The cross is the symbol of transition from death to eternal life and those who are crucified on the left and on the right of the Xristos, symbolizing the two components of the world that accompany him to eternal life. At least one does, the virtuous, converted still on the cross, at least according to Luke, not according to Mark and Matthew, where both evildoers revile the Xristos.

According to its original version, the cross of the Xristos is the symbol of reconciliation of the two parts of the world, the Jews and the Gentiles, in the new Messianic faith. This is indicated by the "two outstretched arms" of the Crucified, pointing to the two directions, left and right, of the world. Just as God led the people of Israel with outstretched arms to liberty from slavery, now the Xristos leads both Jews and Gentiles to liberty, from the strictures of everyday life to liberty and eternal life, to love and reconciliation. The cross is therefore a symbol of love, the embrace in death of Jews and Gentiles. Thus the "supplicium servile"—the death of torture of the slaves—is transformed into the highest symbol of love, the two "outstretched arms" embracing the two parts of mankind. The instrument of the most pitiless torture becomes the symbol of the deepest love and supersedes pagan cruelty, replaces it. But the form of the death on the cross with outstretched arms was necessary for the creation of a symbol of all-embracing love. This is therefore the symbolic completion of the symbol X as the initial of the Xristos. Another completion of this symbolism are the two evildoers hanged on both sides of the Xristos symbolizing the sinful Jews and Gentiles.

Baptism as a form of magical purification and sanctification is still practiced by Jews and Christians—by the former in "baptizing" Gentile women converted to Judaism in a ritual bath, but also in the form of ritual bath in general. In the Christian world it assumed different forms. Thus spraying of water becomes here a magical rite.

How religion is intertwined with political events is shown by the defeat of the Jewish state in 68–70 A.D. Since then Judaism lost its previous world-political role, it was driven into isolation and had no influence on the course of world civilization. In that it was replaced by its filial Messianic religion. The latter changed the face of Europe, but was driven out almost completely from its original seats in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Syria, where even its name, *Christianoi*, arose in the second century of our era. Its true center in Byzantium was almost totally lost by political developments. Although the Messianic faith did not change the political life of mankind or the quotidian way of life of man, it altered for a long time its art, especially painting, its architecture, its music and its philosophy. Its imagery was realistic in Hellenistic antiquity, formalistic and stylized in the Greek regions. When Giotto painted in Italy, it was said that his realistic art is a return to antiquity. Was he therefore a Renaissance artist? The Renaissance and Protestantism became less important by their theoretical theological or philosophical assertions than by their implied or explicit challenge to traditional Christian doctrine, which opened the way to the deeper challenge of Enlightenment. It was the Hellenistic background of the European civilization that opened the way to science and rationalism. The new astronomy of Copernicus was also a "return" to Hellenistic antiquity and it destroyed the traditional concept of "Heaven and earth", and therefore also the traditional concept of deity.

Thus the same civilization that bred the Messianic faith bred also its rationalistic reversal. The pontifical authorities in Rome felt this very well when they condemned the Copernican system.

The Messianic (Christian) idea of redemption and salvation is based on the idea of catharsis, but it is a catharsis by *blood* (of the victim), not as in a tragedy by *psychological* means (fear and compassion). This is an archaic idea still surviving in antiquity, in the killing of animals in the temples. Another form of catharsis is the baptism, i.e. the *purification* from sins by water. The gospels add the idea of baptism, i.e. purification by the holy spirit, which is a magical catharsis with the concurrence of deity. The idea of a catharsis by human blood is Hellenistic, not Jewish. According to the Old Testament death means pollution (of relatives, neighbors, etc.), not purification. It lacks liberating purifying power.

To the ancient Jews in Roman times the redemption by the death of the Messiah was not easily integrated by the general concepts of their theology. As for the form of the death of the Xristos it was shaped on a Roman model of slave killing. But the Jewish establishment in Jerusalem was not in need of the theatricals of a trial—even with the concurrence of a Roman procurator—to get rid of a Jewish prophet whom they considered a heretic or blasphemer. Therefore the whole idea of a trial of Jesus lacks credibility. Such a trial is fictional. But—*si non è vero, è ben trovato*.

The ethics of Christianity, as for instance expressed in the “Sermon on the Mount”, the non-resistance and the submission to evil, are the ethics of a community of saints in expectation of the end of the world. These are the ethics of a submissive class of people, technically speaking mainly of Roman slaves in the juridical sense (not always in a social sense), who are spiritually united in the expectation of the end of the world. It is in this sense that these ethics become comprehensible. If the end of the world is close by, the resistance to evil is not rational, and the non-resistance may even account for a merit (*mitzvah*) by the Supreme Judge, while the evildoer will soon be meted out his deserved punishment. Non-submission to evil always means strife, and what sense has strife in such conditions? It only destroys peace of mind and prevents the concentration on ultimate things.

This is also how Pauline sexual ethics can be understood. It is better to remain celibate than to marry, according to the Pauline dictum, in view of the closeness of the end of the world. Procreation under such circumstances is superfluous and even detrimental to the peace of mind and the concentration on holy things. Thus the ethics of Christianity, insofar as they differ from Jewish ethics, are definable by two factors. 1) The idea of the end of the world, and 2) by the personality of its promoters. They may be put into the mouth of the Xristos for reasons of prestige but have nothing to do with such a person. They are the ideas of the lower classes of Hellenistic society, especially Jews, in the expectation of the end of the world and the

impending doom of their Roman masters and their inhuman outrages.

The history of the Christian, i.e. Neo-Judaic Messianic faith is unique in that it was not the result of the activities and/or teachings of a definite personage but of the Messianic movement which yielded the theory and created in its image the ideal of holiness in the Hellenistic sense incarnated in a Xristos or Messiah. This designation in its Greek form was quite unusual. The Xristos thus evolved was not a man but an ideal, and the events and utterances attributed to him were to conform to this ideal, to sustain his holiness and uniqueness. This idea yielded three or even four versions about his personality which supplemented each other and added ever more details of his "life." Since these accounts are literary, not historical, they have always also a "meaning" which must be interpreted. This concerns every detail. Thus the crucifixion is meaningful and the Crucified means, i.e. symbolizes, not only infinite love of mankind, for whom he is crucified, and infinite suffering as a supreme attribute of divinity, but it means or symbolizes first "reconciliation" of the parts of mankind, for which he is crucified and reconciliation of God with them, reconciliation of Greeks with Jewry; the outstretched hands mean also the embrace of mankind by God. But it should not be forgotten that the man with outstretched arms and legs is also aesthetically the physically perfect man – *aner tetragonos* – fitting into the perfect figure of the square.

When the believers in the Xristos adopted the new, unusual Hellenizing appellation of "Xristianoï," derived from the Greek translation of the term "Messiah", this was in itself an act of mystification, namely of concealment of the Judaic origin of the faith, and at the same time the final act of separation from Judaism erased, so to say, by the unusual Hellenistic term of the "Messiah". It ceased to be thereby the Messianic form of Judaism. That the term "Xristos" was the Greek equivalent of the term "Messiah" was not generally familiar. It is by no means certain that St. Paul, an early believer in the Messiah Jesus, who speaks of himself as "doulos Iesou Xristou," Servant of Jesus Christ, really used the term Xristos, although he certainly called him Messiah. This unusual expression, "Xristos," is probably the reason why the genealogy of Jesus in the gospel of St. Matthew says in an explanatory way that Jesus is the one "legoumenos Xristos" whom we call Xristos.

It should be clearly understood that the end of the world, i.e. the eschatological event, was the primary concern of the originators of the Messianic faith. It was under the rule of the gens Iulia-Claudia, the culmination of Roman power and Roman evil, that they expected this end as a due reward or punishment, so that the salvation was secondary and accessory to that end. The coming of the Messiah was a logical consequence of that world end, an accessory to it according to the Jewish holy writings. If the end of the world came he had to come too; if he was not to be found, he must have

been killed. The Messiah was the complementary event to the eternal death which was to be healed by him. What was questionable in the first place was not the Messiah but the end of the world. If it was the end, he had to appear, and if he was not to be seen nevertheless, he was certainly killed by the sinners. This order of events was prophesied by the prophets. The Messiah was irreplaceable being the instrument of consolation and conciliation with the end of the world, as he was to overcome it. Since his existence was prophetically certain, it had only to be filled in, if it was unknown and this was done by the gospel writers, who postulated a shadowy Yeshua (Help) as the necessary Messiah. Thus his life story could easily be invented on the basis of the holy Jewish writings, and this was not an "invention," but a filling in of the life of the Anointed One who had to cure eternal death. The main Jewish holidays were then to be messianized, i.e. linked with the life of the Messiah.

The death of the Messiah was a necessary precondition of his resurrection, and the latter had to demonstrate the possibility of general resurrection, its realizability in the world. This extension of the transition from death to eternal life was to accrue to all true believers as a selective immortality. Such extendability was taught by Saul-Paulus. It was the most powerful means of conversion. As for the crucifixion it provided the most public evidence of a total and cruel death of the Messiah, and therefore the clearest realization of the precondition of his resuscitation which was then shown by his disappearance from the grave. This resuscitation was also the proof of the divinity of the Messiah, while his death was a proof of his human nature, so that his dual nature was a clear consequence. Only a mortal man could die and only a god could rise from the dead, so that this was a clear proof of his epiphany on earth. But the death was after a Roman, not a Jewish pattern, and this is a proof that the Gospel writers were Hellenistic Gentiles, not Jews. The death and resurrection of the Messiah is full of contradictions. How could he die as a son of God? If he was partly mortal and partly divine, what did his immortal part do when the human part died?

Paulus, the thirteenth apostle, replaced the twelfth, Judah, who personified the perfidious Jew and was a sycophant and a traitor. Since the thirteenth apostle had to represent the Gentiles in their aversion against the prescriptions of the Jewish law, such as circumcision, dietary laws, etc., he declared them unnecessary and abrogated by the Xristos, who was the Law incarnate. To authenticate this rejection, the thirteenth apostle had to be an Israelite himself. But he was that, so to speak, in an *attenuated* form, as belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, not of Judah as most Jews did. The trouble is that at that time there was no distinction of Benjaminites, they became absorbed by the tribe of Judah. But perhaps he was termed Benjaminite because his namesake, the predecessor of David, the Biblical King Saul, was also a Benjaminite. But at that time the distinct tribe of Benjamin still existed.

Paulus undertook missionary trips to the Greek speaking regions, while the Xristos himself converted the Aramaic speaking southern regions. It may be that the Xristos and Paulus reproduce, to some extent, the Biblical royal pair, King Saul and King David. Just as King Saul tried to kill in an attack of folly the young David, Saul-Paulus “persecuted” the Xristos and his followers in Judea. The New Testament is a commentatorial replica of the Old. Why Paulus is from Tarsos, a “Tarseus”, is less clear. This city was not very distant from Judea, as well as from Antioch and Damascus. Whether Paulus got his Latin name because he was a citizen of Rome, a “polites”, is not clear. This was considered by St. Luke as honorific, just as his alleged Benjaminite descendance. His career reminds one of the Biblical Bileam who was sent out to curse Israel (the Xristos), but blessed them instead. His trip to Athens, as described by St. Luke, is certainly legendary. He not only abolished the Jewish tribal prescriptions for the Gentiles, he also reversed the Jewish order of salvation and of the end of the world. To the Jews the former was merely an adjunct of the latter; he put salvation first. There is no doubt that the doctrinal part of the *Letter to the Romans* has an author, but the originators of the Messianic (“Christian”) faith are anonymous and the names attached to them are fictional. Therefore the end of life of the first and of the thirteenth apostles (Petros and Pavlos) is lost in darkness, because the writers preferred to make it as mysterious as those of Moses, Elijah or other prophets.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. had a most important influence on the fate of Christianity, but it was bound to affect very differently the non-Jewish Hellenistic members of the sect and the Jews in general. While the non-Jewish saints saw therein a just punishment for the repudiation and the killing of the Xristos, the Jews must have seen therein the clear proof that this Xristos was not the genuine Messiah, since according to tradition his coming would be a harbinger of Jewish glory, not of destruction.

The historical structure of the Hellenistic Messianic (Christianic) faith was the following: the overwhelming power and the monstrous sinfulness of the Roman Empire was also the threshold of its destruction; it presaged the end of the world. This prompted God-Father to decree, then, the end of the world. But as he loved mankind infinitely, he decided to send his son to earth to save at least a remnant of humanity, the true Israel. Something similar happened during the Flood, when Noah took to his Ark the beings that were to be saved. But this God-Father acts rather like Zeus, the Father of the gods, he inseminates a Virgin with his breath to produce this Son. In doing so he resembles more the Greek mythological deities than the God of the Jews. The son so born is the Messiah and the Virgin the Mother of God. The task of the Son is to wash away with his blood the sins accumulated on earth since Adam. Original sin means practically that all men are sinners. All heroes wash away the failings of their fellow-

men with their blood, they sacrifice themselves. The Son of God is supposed to save mankind, with his blood, from eternal death and give it eternal life. This conception has in common with Judaism only the eschatological aspect. The Messiah is not a man and a prophet, as with the Jewish tradition, but an Epiphanes, a son of God. This is a typically Hellenistic, pagan conception. What the Messianic (Christianic) sect took over from Judaism was something that was not there, namely a form of salvational epiphany, featuring a demi-god with a human face who was supposed to give mankind eternal life (I am the life). The most important concept here is the belief in immortality as against the fear of eternal death in Hellenistic paganism. This proves that the Messianic faith was basically opposed to paganism and not to Judaism. The most important fact is that it was not generated by a Xristos, the Xristos was generated by the Messianic movement.

It is very strange that Christian tradition knows nothing about the fate of the community of the saints in Jerusalem, about which St. Paul is said to care so much. Of course, without such a community, the whole theory of the division of the world between the apostle of the Jews, Peter, and the apostle of the Gentiles, Paulus, becomes untenable. The reason for the silence about the fate of this alleged community in the years 68–70 A.D. can only be the fact that, such a community never existed there. Otherwise we would have to assume that the saints were afraid to assert any connection with the inhabitants of the rebellious city. But they were by no means afraid to condemn the persecution of the saints in Rome during the rule of Nero.*

* The Neoplatonic theory of emanation of Plotinus may be a depersonalized version of the theory of epiphany of the Messianic faith and perhaps to some extent derived from it.

